

OUR SPIRITUAL SKIES

CHARLES COKE WOODS

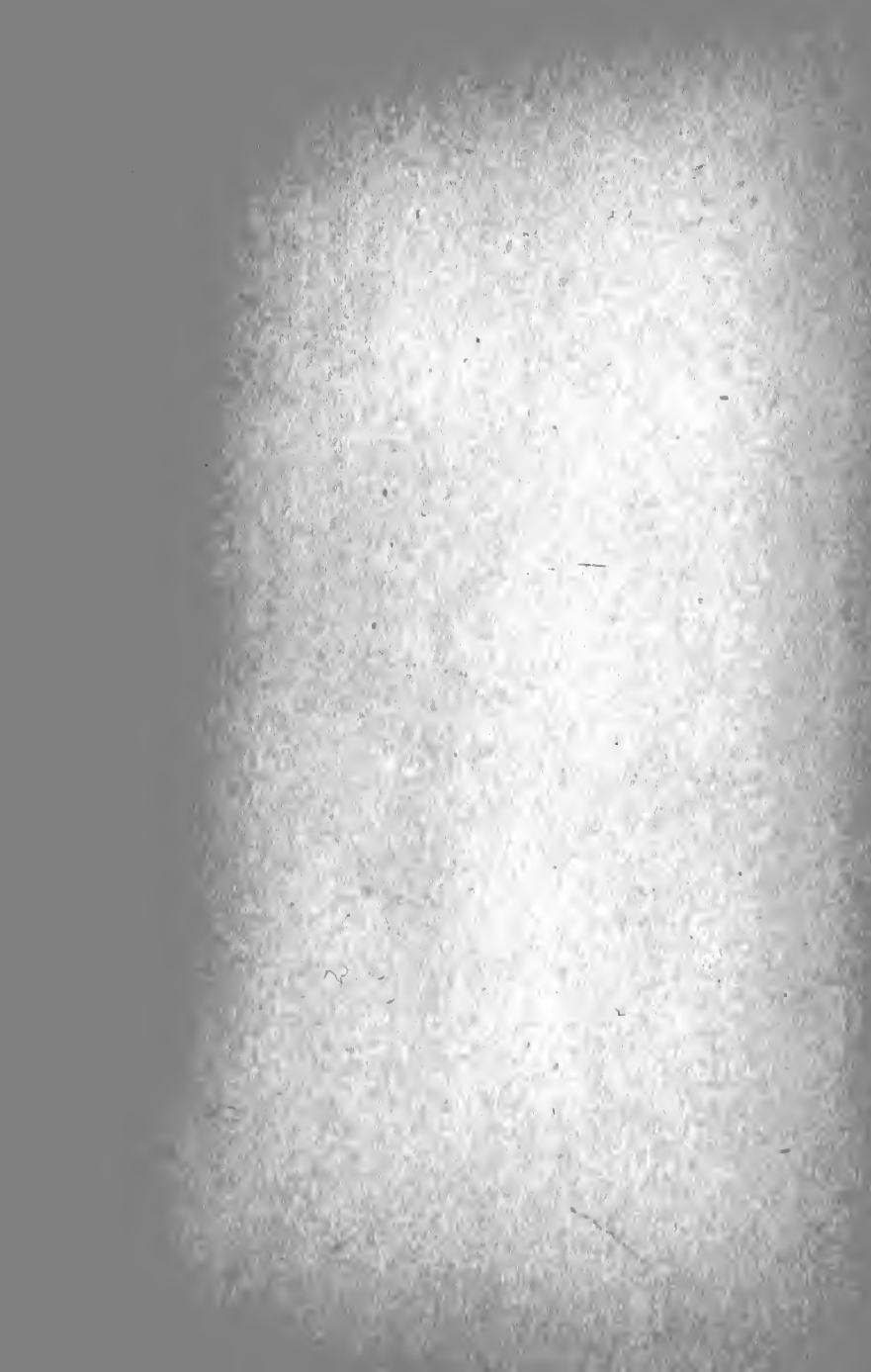


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OUR SPIRITUAL SKIES

BY
CHARLES COKE WOODS

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WITH LOVE
TO
MY GOSPEL SINGING SON
EDWARD MARTINDALE WOODS

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A FOREWORD.....	7
THE PRAYER.....	9
THE SKY SONG OF THE SOUL.....	11

I

THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM LIFE.....	13
Taking a Look at Life.....	15
The Master of the Shadows.....	40
The Scarecrows of Life.....	59

II

THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM LITERATURE.....	71
Songs Across the Storm.....	73
The Soul in Tennyson's Masterpiece.....	74
Shakespeare and the Soul.....	87
A Study of Sorrow and the Soul.....	100
A Literary Searchlight of the Soul—Robert Browning	116

III

THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM SCRIPTURE.....	123
His Word.....	125
The Scripture Setting of Life.....	126
Dreamers.....	139
Holden Eyes.....	143
The Ministry of Mercy.....	150
Points on Power.....	156
Giants and Grasshoppers.....	161
The Persistence of Personality.....	163
The Prerogative of Faith.....	169
The King and the Beggars.....	172
Shelter.....	179
A Soul Among Swine.....	182
God's Siftings.....	188

	PAGE
The Prince.....	190
Love.....	195
Sowing and Reaping.....	199
The Death of Dagon.....	203
Room.....	206
Genius and Jesus.....	210
The Foot-fall of the King.....	213
The Way of the Transgressor.....	218
The Promises of God.....	220
Other Gods.....	222
Paul in Athens.....	225
The Endurance of Love.....	229

A FOREWORD

WE must keep the balance between physical *experiment* and spiritual *experience*. We must not become so fascinated with "scientific facts" as to lose the working strength of a spiritual faith. The *soul* is still the star of greatest magnitude in life's sky. This star must keep burning or our spiritual skies will grow dim and dark. Our night will fall and never lift if we lose sight of Him who is "the dayspring from on high."

On a day in autumn I saw a prairie eagle mortally hurt by a rifle shot. His eye still gleamed like a circle of light. Then he slowly turned his head and gave one more searching and longing look at the sky. He had often swept those starry spaces with his wonderful wings. The beautiful sky was the high home of his heart. It was the eagle's domain. A thousand times he had exploited there his splendid strength. In those far-away heights he had played with the lightnings and raced with the winds. And now, so far away from home, the eagle lay dying, done to the death, because for once *he forgot and flew too low*. The soul is that eagle. This is not its home. It must not lose the skyward look.

We must keep faith, we must keep hope, we must keep courage, we must keep Christ. We would better creep away from the battlefield at once if we are not going to be brave. The ramparts of a thousand wrongs are falling—this is no time for the *soul* to stampede. God's uncounted chariots of fire are sweeping down the skies. Keep the skyward look, my soul; keep the skyward look.

In these pages I have sought to touch the deeper movements of life and experience in such a way as to show that their supreme significance is *spiritual*. I have tried to light my torch at the fires of Life, Literature, and the Holy Scriptures. If these essays help some traveler to find his way among the tangled thickets of the dark, if they shed *some* light on his "Spiritual Skies," I shall be greatly glad.

Foot of "Mount Baldy,"
Ontario, California,
January 30, 1914.

THE PRAYER

ALMIGHTY GOD and All-loving Father, sometimes we have walked under starless skies that dripped darkness like drenching rain. We despaired of starshine or moonlight or sunrise. The sullen blackness gloomed above us as if it would last forever. And out of the deeps of the dark there spoke no soothing voice to mend our broken hearts. We would gladly have welcomed some wild thunder peal to break the torturing stillness of that overbrooding night.

But thy winsome whisper of eternal love spoke more sweetly to our bruised and bleeding souls than any winds that breathe across æolian harps. It was thy "still small voice" that spoke to us. We were listening and we heard. We looked and saw thy face radiant with the light of love. And when we heard thy voice and saw thy face new life came back to us as life comes back to withered blooms that drink the summer rain.

We thank thee, O our gracious Lord, that thy smile of grace and love clears all the clouds away. The skies of day are white with light of harvest noons, and when the evening shadows weave the dusky drapery of night thy lustrous

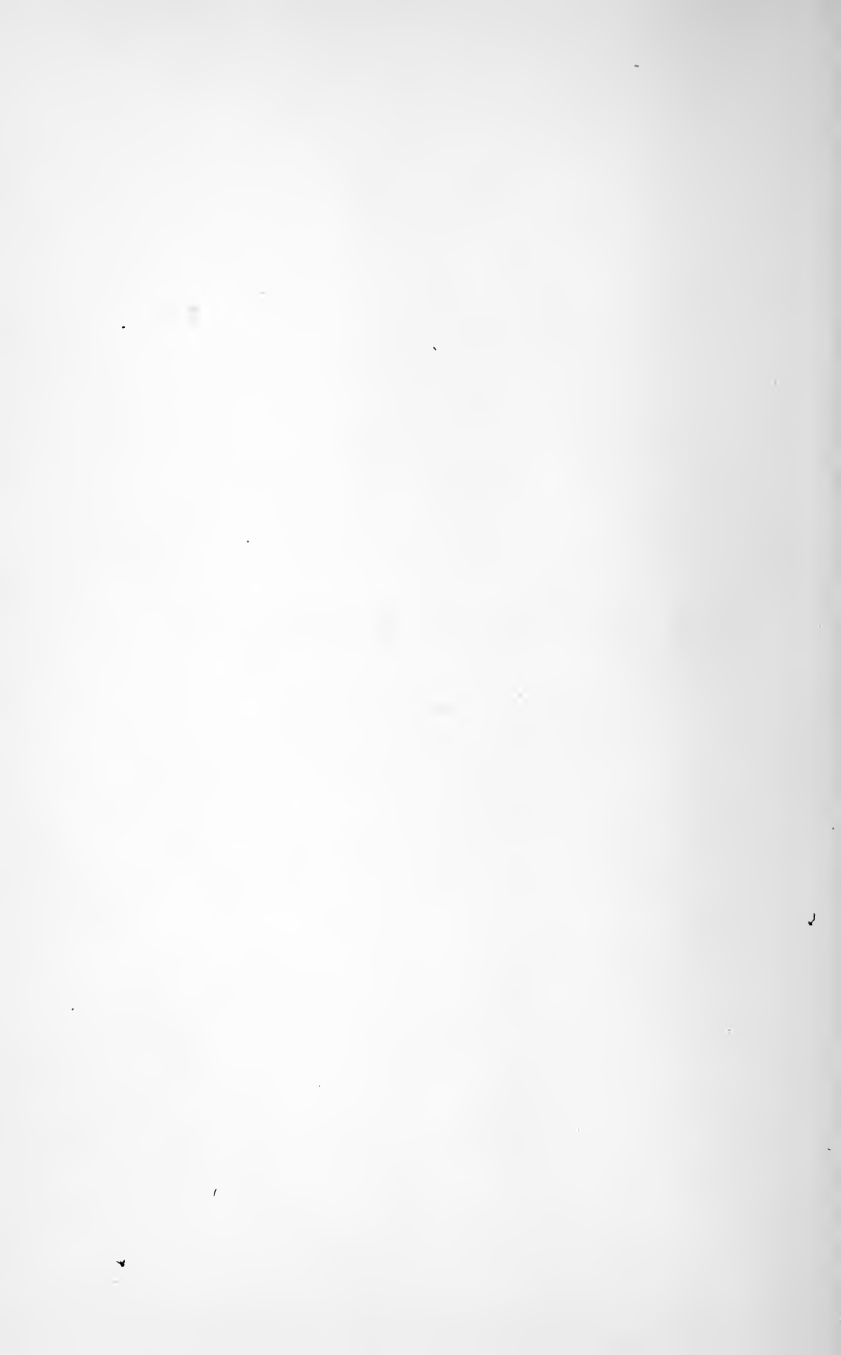
promise-stars shine forth—the sweet forget-me-nots of God.

In the name of Christ our Lord, who is our light and life and strength, we give thee thanks for multitudes of mercies that have filled our nights and days. We thank thee for the hollow of thy hand in which we hide. We thank thee for thy strength by which we walk triumphant ways of toil. We thank thee for “Our Spiritual Skies” set thick with thy eternal stars—and forevermore we give thee thanks. Amen.

THE SKY SONG OF THE SOUL

THE storm's swift wings belong to God,
He folds them when he will;
He speaks above the thunder's voice,
And bids the din be still;
His lips of love shall drink the dark
From every bitter night,
And all my clouded skies shall fill
With his unclouded light.

No dreams of good are aught too good
Some day to come full true;
The largest hope is nearest right—
God's upper skies are blue;
All dark despairs shall turn to hope,
All sobbings into song,
For God and good still hold the throne,
And right shall conquer wrong.



I

THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM LIFE

I will lift up mine eyes.—*David*.

The man who sees the whole of life must be an optimist.
—*Phillips Brooks*.

It takes a great deal of life to make a little art.—*Alfred de Musset*.

TAKING A LOOK AT LIFE

Climb the mast till you are above the fog which lies on the surface of the water, and you will see the sun shining on the spiritual world.—*Ian Maclaren.*

If I have faltered, more or less,
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain,
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And STAB my spirit wide awake.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson*

“If you have gone a little way ahead of me, call back;
'Twill cheer my heart and help my feet along the stony track;
And if, perchance, Faith's light is dim, because the oil is low,
Your call will guide my lagging course as wearily I go.

“If you will say He heard you when your prayer was but a cry,
And if you'll say he saw you through the night's sin-darkened
sky—

If you have gone a little way ahead, O, friend, call back;
'Twill cheer my heart and help my feet along the stony track.”

LIFE is a steep climb, and it does the heart good to have somebody “call back” and cheerily beckon us on up the high hill. We are all climbers together and we must help one another. Every successful climber must have firm foothold. In climbing the steep places it

will not do to depend upon the shale. It is fragile. Granite is rooted in the mountains. That is safe. Life, like the mountains, has both shale and granite. The climber must make choice to fail or succeed, according as he chooses the shale or the granite for his feet. This mountain-climbing is serious business, but glorious. It takes strength and steady steps to find the summits. The outlook widens with the altitude. If any one among us has found anything worth while, we ought to "call back."

Above "the timber line" one summer afternoon I met a young man coming down the mountainside. When I hailed him he said, "The climb is too steep and the air is too thin." He had lost heart and was going back to the valleys. Multitudes are doing that in the actual experience of life. Many have given up the hope of reaching the top and are headed toward the bottom. Well, I know it is a far cry to perfection, but *we must keep crying in that direction*. It is sure that we shall never find the mountain's brow by traveling toward its base. I think I should have become disheartened in that dizzy climb toward the summit of Pike's Peak one summer day if the two stout-hearted companions who were with me had not frequently and cheerily, with sympathy and courage in the tone, paused occa-

sionally for my sake to "call back." And it is in their spirit that I write these lines.

Another feature of that mountain climb it would be well to note. At every step we were rewarded with a fresh and fuller *outlook* and *uplook*. That twofold reward is the greatest glory of the mountain climb. I might as well say at once that whatever view of life does not carry with it outlook and uplook is not the true view. Any other look at life is inadequate and unsatisfactory. You have not seen the mountain when you have seen only its base. You have not seen the ocean when you have seen only the beach. The truest and largest view even of the planet on which we live must take in the sky. Our little world has sky relationships, and any view that does not take in these relationships would be unscientific and unsatisfactory. Human life is larger than any world and all worlds, and any view of life that leaves out the *sky view* must be inadequate. The skies of living beliefs must overarch our deadly doubts. The skies of hope must overarch our dark despairs. The skies of enduring life must bend above our death chambers and our graveyards. To make life worth living at all, we must have some view of life which makes it unmistakably clear that it does not all end in the dark. To do the work of

life we must have a *working* view of life. No man can do the big business of life if he looks at life as a succession of leaps into the dark. A right view of life is essential to one who would do his part in the world's biggest and best business.

A few years ago a New York journal attributed the following pathetic lines to the Czar of all the Russias. Whether that monarch wrote these words or not, they breathe forth, or rather sob forth, a view of life which would utterly cut the nerve of any high or heroic endeavor. It is a view that utterly paralyzes power:

My happiness was born at night,
And suckled in the gloom;
My pleasures have dissolved in flight,
Heart-stricken at my doom;
My soul strives vainly for relief,
Chilled as by drifting snow
By doubts, which mock at the belief
Of finding peace below.

Who could throw light on life out of such a dungeon of darkness as that? Who could lift empires with a burden like that breaking his back? Such a view of life is as deadening as death. Life's engines cannot be run by steamless boilers. The trolley minus the electric power would as well be a twine string.

But let us examine the four principal views that men take of life. There is the *Materialist's* view of life. We need strength—does this view give strength? Life has great sorrows—are there any great solaces in this view? The workman grows weary—does this view of life give rest? Does the materialist's view of life help to heal the wounds that we are all sure to get sooner or later in life's battle? When we lick the dust of some dreadful defeat will this materialistic view of life stand us on our feet again and set us going? When the skies of life go dim above our heads, and the last star is swallowed up in the darkness, will this view of life part the clouds and sweep them away? In the long and lonesome stretches of service, will this view keep us steady and strong? When awful storms of doubt and disappointment, of baffling bereavements and of grief, shall turn their stinging darts upon us, will this view of life help us up the storm-swept heights to the sunny summits? In a word, does the materialist's view of life *support* the struggle of life? That is a fair test of any theory of life. What is it worth in the dust and smoke of the workaday world? If starvation of soul should stare us in the face, would this view of life offer us a stone, or bread? would it offer us an egg or a serpent? If

materialism seeks the rational recognition of our day, it must come right out into the open and submit to the searching tests of human experience. In broad daylight it must bare its breast to the tests of truth. How fares this view in the noonlight of our day? Does it "measure up"?

What is materialism's view of the soul? Is this view up to the levels of scientific and psychological discovery? Perhaps materialism says its best word in its so-called definition of the soul. Here is that definition: "The soul is the function of material organization." What? A "*function*"? Why, man, a *function* is not a *functionary*. Does materialism mean to tell us that the soul is a mere act, and not the actor? If the soul is only a function, then where is human life's functionary. A function is only the process of a functionary.

Is literature the "function of material organization"? Then fill the cases with type; bring the sheets of book paper; get the press ready; the world must have a literary masterpiece. It needs an allegory, a drama, an epic poem, an undying lyric. Let the press and the type and the paper produce them. No, this is not enough. Call the printer. There he is at his desk. But he is just dead of heart-failure. Here is plenty of "material or-

ganization," yet no literary product is possible under these conditions. What ails the situation? The trouble is that presses and types and paper, and even the warm body of a dead printer, are all absolutely powerless to produce living literature. Give us the living spirit of Bunyan, and that living spirit will give us the allegory. Give us the living spirit of Shakespeare, and we shall have the drama. Give us the mighty soul of Milton, and we shall have "Paradise Lost." Give us the living Tennyson, and we shall have the undying "Crossing the Bar." Not even literature is "the function of material organization." Literature is the organized product of the immaterial organizer, the human spirit of the writer. As the leaf, the bloom, the fruit of the apple tree are the output of that mysterious something which we call "life"—intangible, invisible, and immaterial—so is literature the output of the invisible and immaterial human spirit. The deepest truth about it is that literature is the product of an *immaterial* organizer.

Is art the "function of material organization"? Then bring the easel. Fill the paint pots with paint. Bring the brushes. Make ready the canvas. Throw back the studio window-blinds and let in the light. Mankind has need of the Landseer dogs, the Bonheur

horses, the Turner landscapes burning with the light and dreamy with the shadows. Human life will be infinitely enriched with Raphael's "Madonna," Angelo's "Moses" and "Last Judgment," with Holman Hunt's "Christ at the Door," and the Christ pictures by Tissot and Hofmann and Munkácsy. If these are "functions of material organization," by all means let us have them. Here are now in the studio the pots, the easels, the brushes, the canvas. The light is right. But the picture makers—where are they? We shall have no pictures till they come. The immaterial spirit must come before this canvas can blossom into beauty. Then, after this living, invisible spirit has put this apocalypse of beauty and wonder on the canvas, it will need more than the eye of an ox or horse to catch the greatness of its glory in light and shadow, in line and color. It ought to be plain to any clear-seeing mind that immaterial potentialities are the supreme things here. Art is the product of an immaterial, invisible, spiritual organizer. This atmosphere and sense of the invisible hangs about a work of art and is spiritually *sensed* as actually as the olfactory nerve senses the invisible fragrance of the honeysuckle.

Is music "the function of material organization"? Music is the melodious outbreathing of

the musician's breath. There can be no music without the musician's invisible spirit. Place in the music hall the most perfectly constructed piano, organ, harp, or violin, and it would be as silent as a stone, did not the immaterial spirit of the musician touch it to melody. Without the invisible spirit of the musician the material musical instrument is as musicless as a rock. How silent and unresponsive are the instruments of Sousa's band when the master and his players are asleep in their bedchambers! But these silent, dead things will all come to life again when the living spirits of the musicians return. Only yesterday I held in my hand an old violin. It was dated 1712. Close examination revealed the name of that wonderful wizard, Stradivarius. How I wished that Paganini or Ole Bull could breathe across those sleeping strings! Invisible sea winds were blowing their breath through the tops of the old pine trees along the avenue, and in their sighings there were faint suggestions of song, but not a note of music came from that old and yellow violin. All the violins of the world would be like that, were all the violinists away. Music is the output of an immaterial, invisible, spiritual organizer.

Now we have arrived at the necessary con-

clusion that *literature* is the organization of *letters*. *Art* is the organization of *colors*. *Music* is the organization of *sounds*. But the organization is secondary; the organizer is primary. It is plain that the soul is not the "function of material organization," but the *functionary*, humanly speaking, of all organizations. If this is true in the finite ranges and reaches of life, it is also true in the infinite spheres of life.

The materialist's view of life as to depth is too shallow, as to height too low, as to width too narrow, as to length it is too short. It is too small a blanket to cover the giant soul. Its fountains are dry wells, its days are sunless and its nights are starless. It has no food for humanity's hunger, no water for our thirst, no light for our darkness, no strength for our weakness, no guidance for our bewilderments, no hope for our despairs, no adequate supplies for our infinite needs. Materialism gives no sufficient account of literature, art, or music, and therefore it is unable to give satisfactory account of man, the maker of all these. As a "working theory" of life it will not work. As a view of life it is fair to say that materialism is unsane, insufficient, unsatisfactory, and altogether unequal to the great occasion. It fumbles and is un-at-home in things of the soul.

It is puzzled to speechlessness at a bird's song.
What would it do with this?—

"I wonder how the robin's throat
Hath caught the rain's sweet, dripping note—
That little falling, pelting sound,
Liquidly clear and crystal round,
The very heart-rune of the spring,
Enchanted of the sky and ground,
That conjures life from everything.

"No ancient, age-worn witchery,
No incantation, could set free
The fast-bound dead; yet here each day,
Robin and rain in mystic way
Bring back life greenly. Ah, and how
One's heart and pulse obey
That lure of music! Listen now."

What if we take the *Fatalist's* view of life. The old Greek myth tells us of the three fates, or the three destinies. One holds the distaff, the other is weaving, and the third cuts the threads. That is an impressive suggestion. But is there not a larger view of life than that? Who or what holds the distaff? Who does the weaving? Who cuts the thread? What relation does my choice have to the holder of the distaff? What relation do I sustain to the weaver? Shall I have any say as to when or how the "thread" shall be cut? Am I a puppet or a person? Am I a thing or a disposer of things? Am I as a ball shot from a rifle, going perforce where the powder drives

me? Is there no personal potency in my choice that can unlock the keys of kingdoms? Do I not feel the underswell of an infinite sea? Am I a bubble or a sailor on that sea? These are fair questions to put to the fatalist. These questions themselves have a meaning. The answers with which they are met must have equivalent meanings. These great longings of my soul must be met by something other than mere echoes from life's hillsides. Does the fatalist's view of life *match* these longings or does it *mock* them? There is a spiritual insistence in every real man which eternally refuses to be put off by evasive replies to these stupendous questions which everlastingly surge up from the far-away profounds of life. The overflowing full desires of life cannot be set aside by "the emptiness of ages." Mere vaporizings and vacuities cannot supply the subsoil of the soul.

The fatalistic view of life does away with faith. Faith makes petitions to the overruling power. But fatalism holds that whatever that power is, it will grind ceaselessly on till the grist is ground to a powder; that power has no feeling which matches the meaning in the word "tenderness"; that power is absolutely unregarding toward the deepest hungers of the heart. The quality of mercy is as far

removed from such a power as the east is from the west. It is clearly what in political parlance would be called the "steam-roller" view of life. The huge roller will roll on, no matter who prays. In actual experience this view of life makes faith and prayer but silly delusions.

Fatalism does not furnish a working view of life, because it smothers hope and aspiration. Where faith is gone the case is hopeless, for faith and hope are always close of kin. No prayer is possible where there is neither faith nor hope. And without something at least akin to the spirit of prayer there can be no outreachings of life known as aspirations.

No confirmed fatalist could have poured out of his life that exquisite prayer poem of Hall Caine concerning the tragedy of the Titanic. When the soul is utterly swept from all earthly landings its next move is to look to the eternal moorings. We may call this inner urgency instinct, or intuition, or leave it unnamed—it is there as a spiritual fact that we feel. In this simple and sublime lyric prayer we can *sense* spiritual waves that beat against the eternal landings.

Lord of the everlasting hills,
God of the boundless sea,
Help us through all the shocks of fate
To keep our faith in thee.

When nature's unrelenting arm
Sweeps us like withes away,
Maker of man, be thou our strength,
And our eternal stay.

When blind, insensate, heartless force
Puts out our passing breath,
Help us to see thy guiding light
In darkness and in death.

We are thy children, frail and small,
Formed of the lowly sod;
Comfort our bruised and bleeding souls,
Father and Lord and God.

In all the best of fatalism there is nothing which is comparable to the spiritual strength and upsweep of vision found in these noble lines. There is something in them to live by and, if we must, something to die by. If the pilgrim is to continue his pilgrimage, you must leave him his staff, and faith is his staff. Fatalism plunders the pilgrim of his staff.

The fatalistic view of life is not only destructive of faith and hope and prayer, but it makes for a cowardly shift of personal responsibility. Ever since Adam said, "She tempted me and I did eat," an effort to shift responsibility has been an easy tendency of human nature.

There is a fatalism of *ancestry* which shows itself in the oft-repeated words, "I was born thus and so," "I inherited this from my father

or mother." If the trait is a fault or a vice, the speaker usually means that he is excusable because it is an inheritance from his parents. Unquestionably, in the estimates of conduct and character, both as to our own and that of others, we must reckon more or less with inherited tendencies. But this thing can be overdone. No man has a right to plead this, and this alone, as an excuse for habitual prevarication. I think it is plain to every careful observer that in much of the loose moralizing of our day this fatalistic notion has done a deal of mischief.

For others' faults we see no use,
But for our own find much excuse;
We charge our sins from week to week,
To dear dead folks that never speak.

There is a fatalism of *temperament*. Some try to get away from the responsibility of their evildoing by reminding us that they have a "musical temperament," or an "artistic temperament." What a dreary world this would be without these temperaments! We could not have spared Rubinstein and Bach, Hogarth and Rembrandt. The musical temperament is more responsible for music than anybody else in the world who has not the musical temperament. And as for discords, without doubt he is least excusable for producing such disturbances.

Surely if a man is inexcusable for anything, it is for the doing of that thing which he has been given the greatest natural gift *not to do*.

Exactly the same thing is true with reference to the natural capacity for painting beautiful pictures. Yet in some quarters we have been asked to give the largest license for unsightliness and ugliness to such gifted persons. Unquestionably, if we are to hold anybody responsible for breaking with beauty, it is the man who has the greatest natural gift for producing it. If we are going to reason at all, let us be reasonable enough to recognize the fact that there is such a thing as a syllogism. If we are going into the bird world, let us be reasonable enough to expect the singing to be done by the nightingales and mocking-birds, and not by buzzards and crows. And we shall never excuse the mocking-bird if he insists on confining himself to the commonplace "Caw" of the crow. He knows better, and we know he knows better.

But there is a fatalism of *circumstances*. "Man is a creature of circumstances"—we have often heard that. Certainly he is not oblivious to his circumstances, nor is he uninfluenced by them. But is there not a tinge of fatalistic fallacy in that old saying? Has it not often been the lazy man's way of excusing himself

for not trying to change circumstances? The other old saying, that "Every man is the architect of his own fortune," comes nearer telling the truth about life. Well, if "man is a creature of circumstances," he is hardly equal to insects and birds in that particular. The honeybee does not like to be surrounded by the bare boards of an empty hive, and it creates the circumstances of a hive full of honey. A certain little water-bug blows a bubble on the surface of the pond and pulls the little bubble house down to the bottom for his home. He did not like his other circumstances, and he built that little bubble house to improve them. On an April day I saw a robin that was not pleased with bare boughs in the old apple tree. She did not like such naked circumstances, and to better her surroundings she built a nest of mud and horsehair and twine strings. She was a *creator* of circumstances. Plainly, then, if bugs and birds are builders of circumstances, men ought to be. The "creature-of-circumstances" theory is too lazy to be a *working* philosophy of life; but it is one phase of the fatalistic view of life.

The fatalist's view of life is fatal to faith, hope, prayer, and the highest sense of personal responsibility. If it were the right view, so much wrong would not come out of it. The

fatalist's view of life is unsound, inadequate, and unsatisfactory. It is not large enough to meet life's occasion.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

What if we take the *Agnostic's* view of life? Has he not said that "God is the unknowable"? Has he not tortured us by his premature announcement that "The Great Companion" is dead? We have heard him moan across the stormy seas of life saying, "Whether in mid-ocean or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all." Has he put a single finger under any of our loads? Has he blotted one cloud from life's darkened skies? Has he solved any of our puzzles? Has his view of life made it easier for any of us to live? How many thorns has he plucked away and how many flowers has he planted? He said he was bound for the Temple of Truth, but if he ever arrived he must have thrown away the keys, for he never entered. Browning was not speaking of him when he said, "Never doubted clouds would break." Longfellow was not voicing the agnostic's ex-

perience when he sang, "Out of the shadows of night the world rolls into light." Victor Hugo's word to the atheists of France thrilled with a hope to which the agnostic is an eternal stranger when his great soul struck up the singing, "The tomb is not a blind alley—it closes on the twilight and opens with the dawn." Katharine Lee Bates had no reference to the agnostic's experience when she was singing about "Whispers of eternity in all the winds that pass." Agnosticism tells us that we cannot know God. But "God is love," and if the human soul can know anything, it can know the experience of love. The baby knew love *before it knew that it could know*.

Agnosticism breaks down utterly when life's testing times are upon us. It is a broken reed in the mire of misery. I saw it tested once out in the open when an awful storm swept across a young lawyer's soul. He was president of the Agnostic Club. No great grief had crossed his path. No tempest had ever torn the roof from over his head. Be it said to his honor that he had loved his mother well. One day, of a sudden, her voice hushed into a strange stillness and the lovelight faded from her eyes nevermore to return. That young man's soul was shattered and stunned as if shot through with rifle balls. We were

friends. On a beautiful Sunday morning, as I arose to announce the opening hymn for the sacred service of the day, I caught sight of one approaching with a message. It came from the young agnostic and was a request for Christian hymn books containing the songs, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" and "Nearer, My God, to Thee." As that young agnostic sobbed out his grief he found no solace save in the hope that gleamed like a sunrise in those immortal hymns. But he had to wait till life's brightest sun of love had set before he learned how utterly dark and hopeless is the dreadful shift of agnosticism. It is a sound that started out to be a song, but has nothing left but a sob.

What if we take the *Christian* view of life? That is different, wholly different from any of the views which we have considered. A great belief beats at the heart of us all when we take this view. The influence of such belief untethers the soul from sordid things. Measured from the standpoint of its influence alone, this view of life is of infinitely more practical value than any or all of the other views combined. We cannot help thinking that any view of life which helps the heart to believe in the big and blessed things is the best view.

The Christian view of life is threefold. These

points are familiar, but they do not belong to the other views of life which we have been considering. And these three things are indispensable to life's lasting satisfactions and successes.

The first part of this threefold view is *faith*. By this good old word I do not mean a philosophy about beliefs. As useful as a theological creed may be, I do not mean that. I mean a central spiritual conviction in which is rooted the satisfying sense that the Maker and Ruler of the universe is absolutely and eternally reliable. Such faith does not rest on theological dogmas or psychological theories, interesting as some of these may be. It does not depend upon resolutions enacted by religious parliaments. It does rest upon the deepest spiritual conviction of which the soul can be conscious that the Ruler of this universe is a Person who is perfectly wise, perfectly powerful, and perfectly good. It is only around such a faith that a man can build a life that is wise, powerful, good. No man can stand steadily if he be constantly shifting from one foot to another. This spiritual faith will make a man spiritually strong and sure-footed. It ought also to be said that such faith will cause the mind to look forward to the further unfoldments of perfect plans. And this will keep

the heart toned up to the highest levels of strength and service.

The second part of this threefold Christian view of life is *hope*. This is also one of our oldest words, but the experience which it stands for needs constant renewal. If anybody is to go on long pilgrimages of large achievements, he must be sustained with a heart full of this outreach of life called hope. Any view of life that is unhopeful is unhelpful. The highest heroisms of human history have sprung from hope. All currents of enduring power in service have flowed from the inexhaustible well-head of hope. Hope gives *reach* to life's endeavors as nothing else can do. Any view of life that leaves out hope is shorn of strength. It is like a bucket without a bottom—it will not hold water. And if we are to do any worthwhile service for men, we must travel over wide desert spaces through which we shall need to carry something that will hold water, else we shall famish. Hope must be a bucket that is well bottomed and proof against leakage. It is only the hope that the Christian view of life supplies which can be called a sure and steadfast anchor, and we would as well try to walk the waves of life's stormy seas as to try to sail them in ships that carry no anchor.

The third and greatest part in this threefold Christian view of life is *love*. No word has been intended to mean more, and none has been made to mean less. "Faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love." Love is to life what the hub is to the wheel; all the rest is built about this strong center. Love is the obbligato in all of life's song. The love at the heart of this Christian view of life not only has family interests, but human race interests. Its local views widen out into world visions. It may have roots in the earthlies, but it flowers and fruits in the heavenlies. Such love is never indigenous to the soil of selfishness.

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might—

Smote the chord of self, that, trembling passed in music out of sight."

This love is of such a nature that it finds its highest happiness in serving others. It is ill at ease till it can ease another's pain. It rises into heights and atmospheres that lie beyond the natural order. Of love, Charles Hanson Towne thus sings:

Love is most glad with cruel bands
To bind his tender feet and hands,
To scourge himself, to know all loss,
To carry far his heavy cross
Into the vaguest distant lands.

To suffer—O, love understands
The awful waste of desert sands;
 Strange that on beds of thorns to toss,
 Love is most glad!
And for his service love demands
No sacrifice. Lo! he stands
 Calling his golden deeds but dross,
 Flaunting the proud world's piteous gloss;
When flayed and wounded on life's strands,
 Love is most glad.

This survey of life is now at its finish. We have found the materialistic view of life inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is not equal to the occasion. We have found that the fatalistic view of life smothers the sense of personal responsibility. It is insufficient and unsatisfying. The agnostic view of life leaves us helpless and hopeless. We feel that the agnostic is a tired traveler who has utterly failed to find the right road. There is no light at all in his lantern. There is no uplook or outlook to any of these views of life. They are against the highest hopes of the heart. They are not supported by the deepest facts of human experience. They leave the soul suspicious and uneasy. Even those who hold such views wish in their hearts that they could find something better. The Christian view is better *because it makes for everything that is better*. It oils the whole machinery of life and sets it going. It drains from the cup of experience

life's bitterest despairs. It gives the soul a solid rock on which to stand and "fight the good fight of faith." The Christian view of life fits into the scheme of things and gives everlasting meaning to the whole program. It is sober truth to say that if we follow the premises of materialism, fatalism, or agnosticism, we shall arrive at the logical conclusion that human life is a madhouse in charge of an insane superintendent. All the latest findings and facts of spiritual experience and scientific investigations make us wholly unready for such a *finale*. The threefold Christian view of life is in better repute than ever before in the Christian centuries. The more the white light of truth converges upon it, the more clearly it comes into view, and the more satisfactory it seems to the intellect and the soul of mankind. It has a supernal freshness about it which none of the other views can claim, and is wholly up to the greatest occasions of life.

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS

My own hope is, a sun shall pierce
The deepest cloud earth ever stretched.

—*Robert Browning.*

SHADOWS may be used or they may be destroyed. In either case they are mastered, for the force that uses them or destroys them is master. In some spheres the shadow condition is the condition of greatest growth. The beautiful Indian corn never grows more rapidly than in the shadows of a warm summer night. The sun curls the leaves in the sultry noon light, but they quickly unfold if a cloud slips over the sky. There is a service in the shadow that is not in the shine. Life needs the shadow. Only the shadow must be mastered into service. Nothing but sunshine would make a desert of any land.

If all of life were sunshine,
Our faces would be fain
To feel once more upon them
The cooling splash of rain.

—*Henry van Dyke.*

The world of stellar beauty is never seen at its best till the shadows of night slip over the sky. There are beauties that bloom in the shade that will not bloom in the sun. There is much greenery in lands of fog and cloud and

shadow. The florist has "evening glories" now as well as morning-glories. The evening glory will not shine in the noon's splendor, but comes to its best as the shadows of evening deepen. I have been awakened at midnight to see the beautiful night-blooming *Cereus*. The shadows hold beauties that fade in the sunshine. That is a truth in nature and in human experience.

When the musician presses the black keys on the great organ the music is as sweet as when he touches the white ones, but to get the capacity music of the instrument *he must touch them all*. Horace Bushnell wrote about the "Moral Uses of Dark Things," and all human history justifies his treatment of that theme. Many of the brightest things in life and in literature are woven of darkest shadows. When we remember whose hand is on the loom such faith ought to be easy. To Him the darkness and the light are both alike.

Any human experience that throws light on the subject of shadows and their uses ought to be worth recording. What I believe to have been such an experience has suggested the theme of this chapter. In no sense do I wish to awaken mere curiosity concerning what are called occult things. The facts of this personal experience are here set down to be

reckoned with and to be interpreted in the interest of a larger spiritual life. The soul is far fuller of significant spiritual facts than the soil is of physical facts. The truth which the real scientist must come to see is that the things of the soul are even more susceptible to test by *experience* than any material thing is by *experiment*. Spiritual *experiences* are as much more important than physical *experiments* as the soul is more important than the body. Spiritual experience is as much higher in the range of values as the body is higher than the coat which covers it. Many earnest thinkers have failed to make that simple discrimination. They have lost the true perspective. But lately a change is passing upon the minds of thoughtful men. The supremacy of the soul is coming more clearly to view. It is seen more and more that all of life's greatest significances are rooted in the infinite significance of the soul.

It was in a little hospital, at the foot of the Puente Hills in southern California, that an unspeakably interesting experience came to me. It was some three or four days after the surgeons had cut close around the citadels of life. I was making good recovery, was in no pain, and I was in no sense delirious. It was broad daylight, and I was

fully at myself and wholly aware. There was no mental effort to work out a theory of suffering, or of life or of death. There was no semblance of desire or thought to work up a case to be exploited in the interest of religion. The experience was wholly unsought and unanticipated. But as I recall that experience I think my whole immaterial nature was intensely subjectified. No exterior sight or sound seemed to have any detracting influence upon me. The experience played upon my conscious intelligence as the deft fingers of a harpist would play upon a harp. The experience itself had its inception in what seemed to be a dream of natural objects, but which easily blossomed into what I *sensed* to be the supernatural. An interesting fact in that experience was that the *natural* disturbed me and surprised me more than did the *supernatural*. As the scientist would say, "I am simply stating the fact as I found it," and in this case as the fact found me.

Shadows deep and dark fell in long, unbroken stretches across the valley. It was the valley at the edge of which I stood. I was not there by any choice of mine. There was a strange chill in the black fog. It was the intensest and most mysterious chill that I had ever known. A hand colder than

common ice held firmly around my own. I cried out to him whom I saw not, but whose freezing hand I felt—"Release thy hold upon my hand!" He answered back, "Nay, I shall ne'er unloose my hold." Again and yet again I asked, but always came the same reply. That hand of more than icy chill held firm.

Then of a sudden shone a light that chased the shadows far away. The fogs that had filled the valley fled afar. A radiance as white as harvest noons fell over blooming flowers everywhere. Aged men and women, glad again with youthful joy, walked smiling among the flowers. Gleeful girls and boys played in the meadow grasses jeweled with the dew. Garth and field were gleaming in the light and laughing streams leaped and sang among the greening hills.

Then he who held my hand so close, when chill and dark were on the world, took fright, and as he went away he muttered this, "I must be gone; my power is naught when that light shines, and such great splendor *burns the night away.*" "But stay a moment more," I cried. "Tell me, what is this heap of broken things around the valley's edge?" With startled voice he quickly said, "These are the spent torches of human leaders and philosophers in all ages who essayed to drive

away the dark and chill that hung so long around the foggy valley's edge." By the light that now was streaming everywhere I read on battered torches the dimly written names of Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Comte, and many other names that men have called great. But not a single torch could stand the deadly dark that hung around the valley. It may be further said that I descried a little pile of torches that flickered and failed long, long before they reached the edge of the valley. On one of these little torches, almost faded out, was the name of a deluded soul who had a strange notion of a stranger *somewhat* far away in the high Himalaya Mountains sometimes called the Mahatma. On another of the little torches was the very dim name of an hysterical old woman who had thought to get rid of the disagreeable facts of life, such as pain and suffering, *by denying that there are any such facts.*

The victorious splendor that swallowed up the shadows was not from any man-made torch. It came not from any philosophy, nor science, nor art, nor creed, nor cult, but that unwasting splendor shone from the flaming face of Him at whose approach Death dropped the keys and fled, affrighted and defeated, far away.

And so it was that on that autumn day, at the foot of the Puente Hills, the skies went dim above my eyes, and silence thrust a stillness in my ears. My conscious self faded and failed. Somewhere I was, but *where* what wisest mortal mind could guess? Nor sight, nor sound, nor feeling, nor one thought was registered within that deadly dark. At length the deep, still shadows passed, and just the faintest hint of dawn came slowly creeping back to me across the silences of unremembered life. The touch of endlessness aroused my soul and lured me back to ponder and to pray.

Then fell there on a certain day a kind of swoon upon my mind. But in that strange revealing sleep I found myself aware and full awake. Yet all the drapery of dreams was woven close about my thoughts. In this seeming lapse of life I surely met and vanquished death, or, rather, death was swallowed up by radiance of Him whose feet were shod with fire, and whose mighty hand held all the keys of darkness and of death. It is He, not I, who is the Master of the Shadows.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS 47

The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!—*Robert Browning.*

That is a great word which declares that “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Other dark things have been swallowed up and are swallowed up every day. Is not the darkness of the night swallowed up by the brightness of the morning and the noon? That great daily spectacle is not of man's devising. Every daybreak means that darkness has been swallowed up in the victory of light. “And there shall be no night there.” Not of anywhere

here is that true, but no night *there*. This is a world of many, many nights; but even all of these have had their stars. Somebody has seen the stars somewhere every night. Did not our Longfellow say, "In the infinite meadows of heaven blossomed the lovely stars—the forget-me-nots of the angels"? Light is sown across the sky and light is sown across the soul. It is the victory of splendors to swallow up the shadows. That ought to make it easy for us to believe this great word about the swallowing up of death. Have we not been used to a similar sight? This daily miracle of light ought to acquaint us with the greater miracle of life.

On this very day of the springtide, as I write these lines, death is being swallowed up of life, out in the gardens and forests and fields—it is a familiar fact throughout the whole nature world. It is a part of the physical world's program. It is a part of the spiritual world's program. Death is not necessary disaster. It is often a condition of the most splendid conquest. This is not "a vale of tears" because it is a world of death and dying. There are no tears on death's cheeks. Tears are for life and the living. This is the place for tears. Tears are a part of the earthly program—a part of God's earthly pro-

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS 49

gram. In all human annals it is written large everywhere that some of the most tearful days of history have been some of the most triumphant days. If this is one of the great facts of human experience, why not take it home to the heart and reckon with it? All tears are to be wiped away, somewhere, some day; that is to be in the program farther on, but not yet. To transform tears into rainbows is another victory of light. As in the physical so it is in the spiritual, light is the Master of the Shadows.

Last spring's living leaf is the dead leaf mold of to-day. But out of the leaf mold of to-day is surely springing the leaf life of to-day. One does not need to be a scientist, nor even a naturalist, to see that truth in nature. It is plainly a part of a plan for the tree and its life. It is an unmistakable case of death being swallowed up of life. If there is no other place in the universe where this gospel philosophy concerning death comes out and exploits itself in the open, it is perfectly plain that it does in *this* place. This shadow of death is certainly swallowed up of life in the rehabilitation of the orchard in the spring-time. I have heaped the ashes of dead trees around the roots of my roses, and have seen death and dissolution swallowed up in the

life of the rosebush and transmuted into fragrance and beauty and bloom. It is no farfetched fact brought to the fore by special pleading to say that this swallowing up of death by life is almost a commonplace in nature processes.

I have pressed this point because it is the Pauline point in his great gospel philosophy of the resurrection process. "Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened *except it die*." The larger life of the wheat grain is surely conditioned on its death. This is a saying which is at once simple and sublime, palpable and profound. It lies close enough to the surface for common minds to see, but it plunges into depths which are profound enough for Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and our moderns, Eucken, Bergson, and Bowne.

Our leaders of thought will some day come to see that the gospel philosophy speaks the first word on all primary questions of human life and experience, and that it also speaks the last word. Let philosophers philosophize; they help sometimes—*some*. But have they not many times "darkened counsel with words"? If they have never shaken the temple of truth, have they not sometimes shaken the pilgrim on his way to that temple? But the hammer of gospel philosophy is ever driving

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS 51

some sure spike of truth to its final home in the human heart.

“To die is *gain*.” That is gospel philosophy. To say that that view is Platonic, or Buddhistic, or Bergsonian, or Euckenian would be to savor of intellectual snobbery. It is essentially *gospel*. Let us have as many fresh phrasings of the old truths as are stronger and clearer than the old phrasings, but we must keep to the gospel *facts* about life and death, else we are apt to find ourselves afloat with only fancies and no sure-footed facts about these great human experiences.

This Pauline gospel word “gain” is not a negation. It is no twilight word. It shimmers with the light of eternal noons. It sweeps the shadows from the thought of death. This preachment makes death a condition and not a conquest. It makes death a doorway of hope and not a dungeon of despair. The thought that death is gain is neither easy nor common to human theories nor to human philosophies. There is a largeness and a light about this truth concerning death that bespeaks its divine source. “To die is gain.” The word thrills with triumph. This teaching makes it plain that death is a key and not a lock. It opens *to* imperishable values; it does not close *against* them.

It is a part of a living process, it is not the *finish* of life. This is not the new teaching of any new philosophy. It is the gospel philosophy centuries old. If we were more familiar with this old gospel philosophy, it would not be so easy for us to think that the fresh putting of these old truths is a new philosophy. The new is in the literary putting. The old is in the living principle. Let us welcome the new putting, but let us never say good-by to the old principle.

"To die is gain." Well, let us see. I think it will be gain in a *larger freedom*. Fleshly fetters will have fallen from the spirit. These handicaps of flesh and blood and bone will be gone. Free and easy movements will be unspeakably facilitated. To die will be gain in freedom. That is Pauline gospel philosophy.

To die will be gain in *larger outlook*. There will be no optic windows dimmed by tear mist. Clouds will not blind us to the far visions of the eternal day. New seeing will have come upon the soul. The perspective will be perfectly proportioned. We shall see with unhindered vision.

To die will be gain in *growth*. Spirit growth here is made against great odds. Earthly cages cramp the soul's eagle wings. Growth will be unhindered in that new and larger

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS 53

life. It will be growth to appreciate the eternal values. It will surely be growth to serve. It will not be growth in bulk, but in spiritual blessedness and beauty. It will be a growing from character to character.

To die will be a gain in *gladness*. It will be a gladness of constantly increasing knowledge. It will be a gladness of constantly increasing strength to serve. It will be a gladness of constantly increasing life and love and of unhindered spiritual realizations. It will be a gladness of acquaintance and discovery. Every right joy that budded here will unfold in full flower and in full fruition there. This is no new Bergsonian progression; it is the age-old gospel philosophy. And somehow the soul can sense that this Pauline gospel philosophy about the *gain* of death is the supreme truth about *life*. This glowing truth about death—that it is ministrant to life—if it take deep hold upon us, will master every shadow in our anticipations of death. Death is a part of a plan, a wide and wonderful plan.

Joseph Parker called death a “visored friend.” And that is well said. Death is but life’s disguises in some of life’s larger forms. This gospel view of death is beautifully put by Parker in a poem of his own making. The

shadows lift when the light of this truth spreads over the soul. Let us hear the great preacher-poet speak his word of interpretation:

I had an interview with Death—

The place, a lonely dell, winter-bound, swathed in spotless snow;

The time, new-risen morn; the last star, paling

As if in fear, retired but not extinguished.

A spirit strengthened me to brave the enemy of life,

And gave me courage to upbraid his cruelty;

My speech I do remember well, and Death's reply.

Said I, in heightened tone, as if to keep uncertain

Courage steadfast and ardent: "Monster, of thee

No man speaks well; thy silent tread makes

The house tremble, and in thy cold breath all

Flowers die. No little child is safe from

Thy all-withering touch; nor mothers

Dost thou spare, nor lovers weaving life's story

Into colored dream, nor saints in lowly prayer.

Why not content thyself with warring and succeeding

In the gloomy jungle?—smite the tiger crouching

For his prey, or the lion in his fierceness,

Or fly after the panting wolf, or lodge

An arrow in the heart of the proud eagle.

Why devastate our homes? Why kill our little ones?

Why break our hearts and mock our thirst

With the brine of useless tears? O Death! I would

That thou wert dead."

Then Death answered me, and filled me with amaze:

"Believe me," said the weird defendant, "thy reasoning

Is false, and the reproach an unintelligent assault."

His voice was gentle, and through all his pallor

There gleamed the outline of a smile; I saw

Transfigured Death!

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS 55

"I am God's servant; the flock must be brought home:
I go to bring the wanderers to the fold.
The lambs are God's, not yours, or yours but to
Watch and tend until he sends for them;
Through your own fatherhood read God's heart,
Through your own watching for the child's return
Conceive the thought that glows in love divine."

He paused. Said I: "Could not some brighter
Messenger be sent? An angel with sunlight in
His eyes and music in his voice? Thou dost
Affright us so, and make us die so oft in
Dying once. If our mother could but come, or some
Kindred soul—or old pastor whose voice
We know—any but thou, so cold, so grim!"

"I understand thee well," said Death; "but thou dost not
Understand thyself. Why does God send this cold snow
Before the spring? Why icebergs first, then daffodils?
My grimness, too, thou dost not comprehend;
The living have never seen me, only the dying
Can see death. I am but a mask; the angel thou
Dost pine for is behind; sometimes angel-mother,
Sometimes father, sometimes a vanished love,
But always to the Good and True the very image of the
Christ. No more revile me, I am a visored friend."

The dell was then transformed; the snow gleamed
Like silver—the day a cloudless blue, and
Suddenly living images filled the translucent space;
And then I asked of Death if he could tell whence
Came they. And he said: "These are mine,
A reaper I, as well as shepherd. I put in the sharp sickle,
I bound the sheaves, I garnered the precious harvest,
And when I come angels sing, 'Harvest home.'"

That the dark things of human experience
are called into the high and holy service of

the soul, and that the shadows are mastered by the unquenchable light of the eternal love—those are the comforting truths. The agnostic, the materialist, the sensualist never sight those truths. Among unlifting shadows they stumble on. They have not caught the gleam of that eternal light that shines across these earthly vales and hills. They have not yet learned that life's shadows are not to be mastered from the human side. The shadows will never be mastered by philosophies, nor cults, nor creeds, nor even by psychologies, but by the life of Him who is the light of every man that cometh into the world. He is the Master of the Shadows.

Any study of sorrow and its shadows which does not make clear the usefulness of it all to human life is an inadequate study. Sorrows and their shadows may be woven into supreme services. Light breaks in and masters the shadows the moment we see their high service to the soul. We have misread human history if we have not seen that out of the shadows of suffering have sprung the great literatures, the great paintings, the great melodies, the great discoveries, the great inventions, the great philosophies, the great sciences, the great civilizations. All of them have blossomed into the light out of the shad-

ows of suffering. On his human side the perfection of the perfect man was wrought by suffering. This is the philosophy of faith which bravely faces the facts of life. It is constructive and not destructive, it is affirmative and not a negation. In the light of this truth the shadows flee away. If we can see that sorrows of earthly origin are put to heavenly uses, we may catch sight of a supreme sanity in it all. We need to see the rainbow side of the cloud. That is what an Egyptian prince saw when he said to his brothers who had betrayed him, "Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." The river may carry many defilements till it takes its final plunge into the purifying sea. The divine transmutation of human sorrow is the gospel philosophy. It is sure that this earthly life is a school and that Sorrow is a divinely appointed teacher in that school.

"I walked a mile with Pleasure,
 She chattered all the way;
 But left me none the wiser
 For all she had to say.

"I walked a mile with Sorrow,
 And ne'er a word said she;
 But, O, the things I learned from her
 When Sorrow walked with me."

No mere negative view of death can hold the most significant truth about that fact. *As the*

greatest solaces have the greatest sorrows for background, so the full-length portrait of life must be painted on the negative background of death.

The dark pigment is out of place if it be in the foreground of the picture. It must be in the background. There will still be shadows in the picture, but they will be of service to bring out the high-lights. The shadow will play its part in the picture's proportions. The shadow will be mastered by being used. Or, to vary the figure, like some wild beast of the jungle the shadow will be kept "at bay" by the undying camp fires of this gospel faith.

All of this truth about the place and ministry of the shadow is set in a beautiful song by Katharine Lee Bates, and is titled "Yesterday's Grief." Let us sing it together:

The rain that fell a-yesterday is ruby on the roses,
Silver on the poplar leaf, and gold on willow-stem;
The grief that chanced a-yesterday is silence that incloses
Holy loves where time and change shall never trouble them.

The rain that fell a-yesterday makes all the hillside glisten,
Coral on the laurel and beryl on the grass;
The grief that chanced a-yesterday has taught the soul to
listen

For whispers of eternity in all the winds that pass.

O faint-of-heart, storm-beaten, this rain will gleam to-morrow,
Flame within the columbine and jewels on the thorn,
Heaven in the forget-me-not; though sorrow now be sorrow,
Yet sorrow shall be beauty in the magic of the morn.

THE SCARECROWS OF LIFE

I will trust, and not be afraid.—*Prophet Isaiah.*

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.—*A. H. Clough.*

The thing in the world I am most afraid of is fear, and with good reason, since that passion, in the trouble it causes, exceeds all other accidents.—*Montaigne.*

WE are all familiar with the fears of life. Almost everybody is afraid of something. We are afraid of sickness and sorrow. We are afraid of disaster, disease, and death. We are afraid of disappointments. If we have not been disappointed, we are afraid we will be. If nothing dreadful has happened to us, we are afraid it will happen. Now, we ought to remember that the most fearful thing in this whole ghostly list of fears is *our own fearfulness.*

The most of the scarecrows of life are like the scarecrows in the old-fashioned garden—they are only a bluff; there is nothing in them to be feared. No wise bird was ever much frightened at those dead scarecrows in the garden. Our children are afraid of the dark, and their fathers and mothers are afraid of other things quite as unsubstantial as the darkness. A shadow has never hurt anybody, but the *fear* of a shadow has.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

To the heart of courage "the lions in the way" are all tied, save such as hope may harness to serve our needs. Battles are never won by fear, but by faith. No man ever won a race by being afraid to start. We never had learned to swim had we stood forever on the bank shivering with fear. We had to plunge in. Hesitancy is not a characteristic of heroes.

In recent years the press was telling us that in some places Halley's comet created a stampede among scores of superstitious people. Some were prostrated and sickened with terror. Some were frightened into insanity, and others were so badly scared that they were driven to suicide. The news-gatherers told us that in some parts of the world people were expecting the comet to smash the earth to fragments. In some towns messengers went through the streets blowing horns to remind the terrified inhabitants that the world was about to come to an end. Expectation that the world would be burned up by the comet caused some people to confess murder and other crimes of which no one had supposed them guilty.

A dignified New York editor told us in his journal that men in some sections of the country ordered their coffins when the comet appeared, and some even dropped dead at the sight of it. Now, that comet did not hurt anybody, but the *fear* of the comet did. I would rather be killed by a comet than to be killed by the fear of a comet. There would be more dignity in it, and it would not be half so humiliating to one's friends.

We are told on good authority that in 1888, when the yellow fever epidemic visited Jacksonville, Florida, many died from fear lest they might die of yellow fever. *Fear* is as fatal as *fever* when it gets a good hold.

It is reported that in recent years a certain reputable magazine had twenty-five hundred persons interviewed and it was found that they had seven thousand fears. One man feared that he would lose his position, another feared that he would not get one, another was afraid of poverty, another of contagion, another of sickness, and another that he might be buried alive. But the interviewer reported that each of the twenty-five hundred persons had some sort of distressing fear. Who can estimate the repose and happiness that would have come to those twenty-five hundred fearful folk if they had only gotten

close enough to God to find out that he can be trusted? "*I will trust, and not be afraid.*" Let us venture on that. In that way lies help.

Intelligent faith in God is the only antidote for our foolish fears. We must keep that fire burning at any cost. Sunset time is coming to us all, but if we keep the torch of faith aflame, then "*At eventime it shall be light.*" If faith dies, all of our songs will turn into sobs. Even at the price of infinite pain it will pay to keep that fire burning.

Some time ago the newspapers were telling us of Mr. M. A. Mahoney's experience with hungry wolves in the Northland. On his way from Fairbanks to Valdez, Alaska, accompanied by his dogs, he was pursued by a pack of hungry wolves. He lighted a huge fire at night to keep them at bay. But in spite of this the beasts crept closer and closer to the traveler, as he guarded the body of his companion who had died on the way. Mr. Mahoney was obliged to battle against sleep as well as to keep the camp fire from dying down. The one supreme thing was to keep the fire burning. He knew that it was dangerous to sleep, and to prevent it, night after night, he tied a burning pine-knot to his arm, and when the flame crept close enough to hurt he got up and replenished the fire. This

he did for three successive nights till he reached a place of safety. To keep that fire burning was his only salvation. And it is only the fire of faith that will keep away the wolves of fear. "*I will trust, and not be afraid.*"

There may be thousands of phases of fear, but there are three outstanding fears with which all men have been more or less familiar. There is the fear of *disease*. We have all had that, either with reference to ourselves or with reference to some one we have loved. More than once that fear has stolen our slumber. No one of us has been able to master any fear that has ever obsessed us till we could truthfully say, "I will trust, and not be afraid." And why should we be afraid of anything that God can master? He is the master of all our sicknesses. That is not saying that some sickness will not some day be the means of our taking away. But the truth is that *if God can call physical sicknesses into the service of the soul, it may be a greater service to the soul than it would be to cure the sicknesses*. And is not this the preachment of Paul? It was that prince of apostles who said, "Our light afflictions work for us." And if they work for us, are they not the servants of the soul? That is the great and glorious gospel philosophy concerning the sicknesses and sor-

rows of life. That is the only philosophy which can break the sullen spell of humanity's sorrows. God did not take away Paul's thorn; he did better—he mastered that thorn and made it Paul's servant. The ministry of *thorns* has often been a greater ministry to man than the ministry of *thrones*. "The Ministry of Thorns"—let some poet weave that significant theme into the soul's epic.

If we fear disease, it is because we shrink from the pain it implies, or because we dread the failure which we think will surely follow disease. But hope has a way of following often on the footsteps of despair. We would not shrink so from disease if we could foresee it as a possible condition of greater mental and spiritual conquests than any we have hitherto known. But there is an overbrooding Wisdom and Mercy and Power that again and again has harnessed all manner of sicknesses and sufferings into the service of the soul. Take a few simple illustrations of this fact: My friend asked Mr. Ira D. Sankey, after that great gospel singer had lost his sight, if God did not seem nearer to him in the days of his prime, when he was singing to enraptured multitudes, than he did in these days of blindness. The singer promptly replied, "God was near then, but he is *nearer* now."

God did not take away Fanny Crosby's disease of blindness, but he mastered it and made it a servant to her singing soul. Even lately, she has told the world that she thanks God for the blessing of blindness. May not using disease as a condition of helpful ministry to humanity be a greater mastery than simply curing it? When Frances Ridley Havergal's mother suggested that the poem which her daughter had written might be improved, that sufferer said, "Wait, mother, till the next paroxysm of pain is over, and the song will be sweeter." And is it not true that pain has sweetened many a song? So it is that God may do one of two things with our diseases: he may cure them if he will, or he may transform them into servants of the soul. In either case he is the master of disease. The use that God is able to make of disease may be a far greater thing than the mere cure of disease. The reason the princely apostle gloried in infirmities was because of the immense usefulness of certain weaknesses. "When I am *weak*, then am I *strong*." That is surely a great truth paradoxically put. The appeal of a baby's weakness is more useful to mankind than the spectacular strength of battleships. In any event disease may be cured, or it may be conquered

into a servant. "*I will trust, and not be afraid.*"

Many are greatly troubled by fears of *disappointment*. This may be called anticipatory fear. I am persuaded that it is a "scarecrow" that stands to-day in many of our gardens. But, in truth, have not our *fears* of disappointments often bothered us more than the disappointments themselves?

I think we can all remember that in many instances the disappointments of childhood were caused by the disallowance of parents. It did not please them to deny us and to disappoint us, but the denial and disappointment of childhood brought help and happiness to our manhood. All of this, in certain cases, the wisdom of our parents could foresee. Impatient childhood sought only the pleasure of the moment. Was it not a great disappointment to us to be sent to school when we had laid all of our plans to stay at home and play? But that schooling, which occasioned the child's disappointment, has brought many a happy and successful day to manhood. Had we been wiser, those childish disappointments would never have awakened our foolish fears. Disappointments are often the furnace fires that gloss into beauty the vases of life. How often our disappointments have been like

blustering winds that have swept the skies of life clear of clouds! Many of our disappointments have been but the Celestial Surgeon's instruments cutting away the deadly disease of selfishness. In the high-lights of eternity's to-morrow I think this will be the outstanding truth about the most of our earthly disappointments. "*I will trust, and not be afraid*"—of disappointments.

"I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;
I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet."

Perhaps the one great fear that we have all, at some time in life, sighted from afar is the fear of DEATH. The greatest Book in the world declares that some people are all their lifetime in "bondage through fear of death." That is like walking at high noon atremble with fear at the thought of sundown. That fear would fade all the flowers and spoil all the laughter of life. It would be like a worm eating at the heart of every ripening joy. Death is only a pause in a dressing room for a change of raiment to go into the gardens of God. But a change to better garments has never been wont to frighten us. Death is only a "rest" in the song. The Music Master will wave his baton in a moment and set us

to singing in the full chorus. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." No, no, we are not like little children afraid of the dark. We have seen a great light that shall drink away the dark. We shall go singing into the shadows, and as we sing the shadows shall fade and fade away.

There is hardly any greater achievement possible to a man than to go singing and serving through life. To be glad and unafraid—that condition of heart and mind will put us at our best. We would as well be eaten up of wolves as to be eaten up of fears. Let us away with them. There is more to be glad about than there is to be sad about. There are a thousand reasons for faith where there is only one reason for fear. The sun can weave the blackest clouds into rainbows—and so can a fearless and hopeful heart.

O heart of mine, we shouldn't worry so,
What we've missed of calm we couldn't have, you know;
What we've met of stormy pain,
And of sorrow's driving rain,
We can better meet again,
If it blow.

We have erred in that dark hour we have known,
When our tears fell with the shower all alone;
Were not shine and shadow blent,
As the gracious Master meant?
Let us temper our content
With his own.

For we know not every morrow can be sad,
Then, forgetting all the sorrows we have had,
Let us fold away our fears,
And put by our foolish tears,
And through all the coming years,
Just be glad.—*James Whitcomb Riley.*



II
THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM
LITERATURE

The first thing we want for the sake of a great literature and a great poetry is a noble religion which will bear, by its immaterial truths, our intellect, conscience, emotions, imagination, and spirit beyond this world; and yet, by those very truths, set us into the keenest activity in the world for the bettering of the world.—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

SONGS ACROSS THE STORM

A HARP stood in the moveless air,
Where showers of sunshine washed a thousand fragrant blooms;
A traveler bowed with loads of care
Essayed from morning till the dusk of evening glooms
To thrum sweet sounds from songless strings;
The pilgrim strives in vain with each un-
answering chord,
Until the tempest's thunder sings,
And, moving on the storm, the fingers of
the Lord
A wondrous melody awakes;
And though the battling winds their soldier
deeds perform,
Their trumpet-sound brave music makes,
While God's assuring voice sings love across
the storm.

THE SOUL IN TENNYSON'S MASTERPIECE

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave—
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

—*In Memoriam.*

OUR eyes are often blind until sorrow strikes off the scales. Tears are telescopes through which appear the rainbow arches of love. Tennyson sees through terrestrial troubles to celestial triumphs. An awful sorrow had struck him moaning to the earth. It seemed as if he never could sing again. Flung to the earth like a mortally wounded rider, his heart was utterly unhorsed. The burning dust of despair blistered his lyrical lips. If another day should dawn, its sky would be sunless. If another night should fall, its brooding blackness would bend above him without a star. If another spring should walk across the fields, it would be songless and flowerless. Sorrow had come full sway upon his soul. For once his magic muse had wholly hushed, but not for long, thank God, not for long.

How the soul behaves itself in supreme sorrow—that is exponential of its quality.

How do you meet the sorrows of life? The answer constitutes the measure of a man. Do you look skyward or earthward when the storm strikes. That will tell the tale of victory or defeat. Here is a great soul stooping under a mighty sorrow. Great souls have great sorrows. Shallow souls never take the soundings of the deepest seas. Tennyson sounded the deeps. Lincoln said, "If any man out of perdition suffers more than I do, I pity him." And Jesus—but we must not speak of his sufferings here. They are unmatched in the *misereres* of mankind. Greatness greatly suffers. It may save others; itself it cannot save. But what is Tennyson doing? A moment ago, save for his sobbings, we hardly thought him alive. Grief had well-nigh slain this giant soul. A moment ago a wordless woe hung on his heart like a black night. What will such a soul as Tennyson do with such a sorrow as his? Listen: *he will make his misery into music*. Not in self-pity will he sing, but he will comfort others by that comfort wherewith he himself has been comforted of God. He is not sobbing now, he is singing, and it is a song for the ages:

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death, and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die:
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

No sorrow can smother the soul that looks up and sings like that. That is the sky song of the soul. "Thou wilt not leave us in the dust"—that is the note which gives immortal sweetness to this song. It is no ditty of the dust. It is a sky song. Mankind will make any man laureate who will sing like that. We must ever hear some voice like that singing through our battle smoke, or we shall never win our battles. The dismal dirge of the poor old monk who kept saying, "Brothers, we must all die," will not help us to *live*. If we take care of life, life will take care of death. Life is our main business. There is neither lift nor life in the song or preachment that ends in the dust. Contrast Tennyson's splendid slogan of *life* with Omar's song of the *dust*. Notice how the heart's temperature goes down in this sad song of Omar:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped—
“I came like Water, and like Wind I go.”

Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing
Nor *whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

This sounds like the moaning of the winter wind around the chimney top when the fire in the grate is out. In this song there is surely no solace for life's sorrows. There is no healing here for our heart-wounds. There is nothing here to rally us again when the battle has gone against us. This literature capitalizes such words as “water,” “wind,” “waste.” Here they are in Omar's song on the page before me. But the great words in Tennyson's “In Memoriam” are “life,” “love,” “duty,” “destiny,” “God.” Here is a meaning that catches “the far-off interest of tears.” The underswell of the soul's immortal sea is here. Here are eternal tones that sound across the long centuries of the soul. Breaking over these skies is an eternal day that swallows up all the brooding nights

of earth. All the way through these lyrical mountains of Tennyson we are walking with one who, with unerring certainty, triumphantly threads his way through the tangled thickets of the dark. The deeper grows the dark, the clearer sounds his call. He has seen a great light, and we feel the floodings of his faith.

Tennyson sets his sorrow to music and sings a mighty song. The eye of Hallam has faded, the voice of Hallam is hushed, the body of Hallam is dead and cold, but love will keep his love alive forevermore. Had not Hallam died when he did and as he did, how could Tennyson ever have given us this masterpiece of "In Memoriam"? It has always taken poniards of pain to find the deepest fountains of song. Was he not a great poet himself who said of the poet that he learns in sorrow what he teaches in song? No supreme song has ever been written by any singer who has not first felt the furnace flames of some supreme sorrow. Would you find the poet's flame? You must walk through the poet's fire. The King's question to candidates for coronation is, "Can you indeed be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Supreme suffering—that is the price of supreme song. Tennyson paid that price. It is a sort of soliloquy of the soul. He is

talking to his own heart about high and eternal things, and, happy for us, we have overheard him talking. We have had our sorrows too, and the ache of our breaking hearts has forced us to eavesdrop a little at the gateways of eternal song. We have pushed our way to the edge of the dark and we have heard God speaking his sweet solaces to select but stricken souls. Had we not caught that comfort, our hearts had held their awful ache forever. Thank God, we have been at the gateway of eternal goodness with Tennyson, and we have heard God speaking to his suffering soul, and that tender speech is also for us.

Toys and trinkets are easily won, but the greatest things are greatly bought. The topmost place of power is always bought with blood. You may have the pinnacles if you have enough blood to pay. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." That is the conquest condition of the holy heights everywhere. The story of the real heroisms everywhere is the story of sacrificial blood. The chiefest values in life and character are not blown across our way by vagrant winds.

"Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,
Such as men give and take from day to day,
Comes in the common walk of easy life,
Blown by the careless wind, across our way.

"Great truths are greatly won, not found by chance,
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream;
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.

"But in the day of conflict, fear, and grief,
When the strong hand of God, put forth in might,
Plows up the subsoil of the stagnant heart,
And brings the imprisoned truth seed to the light.

"Wrung from the troubled spirit, in hard hours
Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain,
Truth springs like harvest from the well-plowed field,
And the soul feels it has not wept in vain."

"In Memoriam" shows us a great soul looking skyward out of a stupendous sorrow. It is no mere writhings of "a worm of the dust." An eagle has been swept down from his high circlings in the sky into the drenched dust of the earth; he has staggered to his feet again and is preening his wings to fly—ay, he is flying now far higher than he flew before the storm. He is at home now amid the thunder-throated voices of the mountains.

This sublime song of Tennyson is proof that the skyward-looking soul has *sensed* more spiritual realities than mere intellectual faculties have ever found. And is not spiritually *sensing* things one way of *knowing* them? There is more than one way of knowing. Even the gross world of matter may be known in any one of five ways, at least. We may

see it, touch it, smell it, hear it, taste it. A still finer world, but just as real, is known mathematically, musically, artistically, intellectually. Another world that is finer yet is known by faith, by hope, by love. Let us not falter here. Let us use the word "know." The spiritual world can be *known* by the spirit of man. Let us give this world of spirituality a chance at us. Let us give ourselves a chance at this spiritual world.

There are three worlds in this world. There is the world of matter, the world of mind, the world of spirit. What could be wiser and more beautiful than to have a definite way of distinctly knowing each of these worlds? We know the physical world physically, the mental world mentally, the spiritual world spiritually. But we know only according as we give ourselves *a chance* to know. We do not know beauty by closing our eyes. We do not know music by stopping our ears. We cannot know light by pulling down all the window blinds. We can never know the spiritual world by shutting it out. The airs of a spiritual world are blowing through this sublime song of Tennyson. If we open all the doors and windows, we are sure to feel the winds blowing from some eternal sea.

This recognition of the three worlds—ma-

terial, mental, spiritual—which Tennyson is constantly dealing with, and which we must all deal with, if we live our life in the large, will swing the whole sublime panorama of life into some sort of system. This view will reduce to a minimum the jumbled-up look of things. There are three worlds, and we may have some genuine knowledge of each, though we may know only “in part.” We may see the road as far as the lantern throws the light, and that is better than not seeing at all.

The brainiest bewilderments of mere intellectualism have arisen out of the failure to discriminate between these three worlds. No man can see any one of them right till he sees it in right relationship to the others. No man knows anything as he ought till he knows that thing in its relationships. “Know thyself.” Yes, but a man must know something of three worlds to know anything of himself. Again and again this meaning emerges from the depths of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam.” It is at the very heart of this brimming message.

See how this prophet of song symbols the fresh hope that comes to his soul, by the spring beauty of the material world. Indeed, the three worlds which we have been considering are beautifully interblended here:

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

“And in *my breast* spring wakens too.”
Here are the two worlds of matter and spirit.
Here is springtide in the material world and
springtide in the soul. To Tennyson the one
is as real as the other. Tennyson’s uses of
symbols from the material world to set home
the significance of experiences of the mental
and spiritual worlds are in evidence all through
this masterpiece. He shows a fine feeling
of familiarity with them all. Nothing more
clearly shows his large intelligence than his

constant recognition of the similarities as well as dissimilarities of these three worlds. The point here is that, in this peerless poem, he treats these three worlds as *equally real*. This is not to say that he treats them as of equal value. He does not mix his measurements here. He keeps them properly proportioned all the way through. But keeping this fine balance and proportion is the very thing in which many great philosophers and scientists have failed. Did Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer keep the balance? With splendid intellectual mastery Tennyson keeps it all the way through.

But he keeps also the gradation of greatness. He steadily and surely ascends from the foothills of the material to the swimming summits of the spiritual. When we find our way to the central fires of the spirit that breathes through this great creation, we feel that there is such disparity between the soul's loves and longings and their earthly realizations that there must be for us some time and somewhere more than we shall ever find in this little round of earthly years. We feel the mighty meaning in this message that the soul of man has "Drawn from out the boundless deep" and must "Turn again home." Tennyson teaches plainly that life itself should teach us the endlessness of life. Hear this:

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.

This man has leaned his listening soul against the gates of morning. He has surely caught the splendor of the soul's sunrise. As Hugo said, "The tomb is not a blind alley; it closes with the twilight, but opens with the dawn." Let us make it irrevocably sure that death and darkness are not the soul's destiny. The dawn light is on the hills.

So be it; there no shade can last
In that *deep dawn* behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past.

The tremendous spiritual reach and urgency of "In Memoriam" is in itself of great significance—not of mathematical significance, nor scientific significance, nor philosophical significance, nor theological significance, as such, but *spiritual* significance. It is the living vine of the human spirit feeling its way up the towering trellis of eternal life. The vastness of our yearnings is prophecy of things for which we yearn. The upward leanings of the inner life are significant of eternal life. There is not enough in our outer world here to match the mighty meanings of our inner

world. The far-off callings of eternity may fall faint upon our earthly ears, but the whispers of eternity are as real as the thunder-peals of time. The lift of some sublime to-morrow is drawing on our lives to-day. We shall keep climbing

Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE SOUL

What your heart thinks great, is great.

The soul's emphasis is always right.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

WHEN God puts a special stamp on a soul that soul is intended to pass current in all kingdoms. Such a soul was William Shakespeare, who was born in 1564. And, as the world's way is, it neither knew him nor appreciated him till, on the anniversary of his birth, April 23, 1616, his wondrous harp fell from his nerveless hand and his magic lips forever ceased to sing. But he could not be hid. Light is revelatory. Shakespeare was a literary and spiritual sunburst. A thrill went across the literary mind of the world when Shakespeare struck the keynote of his song. His wide and deep influence could not be kept in small compass. He was sent with a world-message to the world. He could not be local, sectional, or sectarian.

As "There was a man sent from God whose name was John," so, though in a lesser sense, there was a man sent from God whose name was William Shakespeare. Indeed, is there not some sense in which

every man is sent from God? But the mountain trails of human history are full of the footprints of God's special messengers bearing special messages. Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and all musical masters were sent from God. The supreme artists of beauty, Raphael, Angelo, Turner, Tissot, and Hofmann, as well as others, were sent from God. Will anyone dare to say that Spenser, who wrote the "Faerie Queene," that Dante, who wrote the "Divine Comedy," that Milton, who wrote "Paradise Lost," that John Bunyan, who wrote the immortal allegory in Bedford jail, that Alfred Tennyson, who wrote "In Memoriam," were not men sent from God? Are not all great statesmen sent from God? Was there not a man sent from God to unite the scattered states of Germany, and whose name was Bismarck? Was not Garibaldi sent from God to break the temporal power of the Roman hierarchy in Italy? Who called Washington to be the "father of his country"? And surely there was a man sent from God whose name was Abraham Lincoln. He sends the great reformers. Did God not send Luther to cry, "The just shall live by faith"? Did he not preach that great Pauline message? There was a man sent from God whose name was Savonarola. God sent John Knox to cry,

"Give me Scotland, or I die." And did not God send John Wesley, who said, "The world is my parish"? At every turning point in the world's history we have come upon this great truth. And this is what I claim for Shakespeare—that he was a man sent from God. The claim here made has to do with faculties and gifts which are the divine equipment of genius. The genius himself must be held responsible as any other rational man, not only for faithful and efficient service to mankind, but for the quality of his own personal life and character.

In the persistence and power of Shakespeare's genius he all but touches the verge of the supernatural. It is no wonder that we feel like calling him the "myriad-minded man." The average man sees life segmentarily. Shakespeare sees its full circle. His literary output sweeps from the center to the far-flung circumference of human nature. Yet he is simple, natural, historically accurate. He is scientifically truthful and up to the date of his day. He gives us the finest features of romance. His wit is lightning keen. His philosophy is profound. His metaphysics searches the very secrets of the soul. His imagery drips poetry as flowers drip dew. In thought, in spirit, in form and finish of literary expression

his work shows him to have been and still to be the literary master of the world.

Shakespeare was also a genius in assimilation. He could touch anything to newness and to beauty. He assimilated the creations of others as a living tree assimilates leaf mold, transmuting it to sap, fiber, blossom, and fruit. But the soul of Shakespeare's message is to the soul and about the soul. And it is his treatment of this supreme subject that gives him the topmost place in literary power and expression.

He was original in the uses and arrangements of that which he borrowed. The bee gathers honey from fields not its own, but stored in the hive it is the bee's honey. That is Shakespeare's originality in the use and arrangement of other men's materials. Even from the fields of noxious weeds he could extract the finest honey. Shakespeare held the key that unlocked the hitherto unsung and unsaid secrets of nature and human nature. Naked rocks as cold as steel flashed fire when he touched them with his wizard wand. Centuries of silence sang their secrets when he thrummed their sleeping strings. The stars rained fire when he looked their way. Like the gods of Homer, under the flashlight of Shakespeare's genius the souls of men stride across sky-wide spaces at a step.

Any human thought was better by becoming his. If he borrowed from older works his best materials, it was as a rose borrows from the soil, the air, and the sunshine the elements which its peculiar life transmutes into attar and beauty. It is a mystery to be spiritually felt and not intellectually found. If he borrowed from Bruno, Holinshed, Plutarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and whom not, the material he borrowed was, by his kaleidoscopic versatility, polished, beautified, sweetened, enriched, and multitudinously magnified. There is scarcely a subject worthy of human thought upon which he has not given a significant utterance. And of all the sources to which he is indebted he doubtless owes the most to that unaging Book which sprang from the Infinite Spirit of the universe. Trace the wide and heaven-high flight of his muse on the topics of God, man, angels, devils, sin, righteousness, conscience, character, hope, despair, life, death, and destiny. See how often he dips his pen in divine fountains. He is ever leaning upward to catch the highest voice. This is why it is worth while to study Shakespeare and the soul.

Like the greatest writers, always and everywhere, Shakespeare thinks and sings about God. In Henry the Sixth is the thought of the Psalter, "Blessed is that nation whose God

is the Lord." Speaking of England's defense, Shakespeare says:

Let us be backed by God and the seas,
Which he hath given for fense impregnable,
And with their help defend ourselves;
In them, and in ourselves, our safety lies.

His vision stops short of strength who fails to see God as the backer of every great and good thing. No one who falls short of that truth can be supremely sane and strong. To see God in his greatest ongoing—that is sight supreme. To catch step with God's purpose and his plan—that alone is safety and salvation for individuals and for nations. All sure-sighted souls have seen that truth from Shakespeare to Robert Browning. Tennyson saw it and sang:

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the
suns.

All great prophets and poets have seen the centrality and supremacy of God. Shakespeare and all the other prophets have taught us that for the soul to break with God is to be like a tree that breaks with the soil.

Shakespeare's message on the meaning of man, his potentialities and relationships, his place in creation, and his significance is saturated with the Christian idea, and altogether

memorable. He wholly sees human nature and he sees human nature wholly. His words in *Hamlet* are as meaningful as they are memorable:

What a piece of work is man!
 How noble in reason!
 How infinite in faculties!
 In form, and moving, how express and admirable!
 In action, how like an angel!
 In apprehension, how like a god!
 The beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

This high speech is not an unworthy commentary on the great word in *Genesis*: "Let us make man in our own image." According to God and Shakespeare, man is more than "a worm of the dust." He is a soul of the skies. His faculties are fitted to fit into the Infinite.

In Shakespeare, sin has none of the light and sneering touches given by some of the superficial writers of to-day. In Shakespeare sin is terrible enough to hurl an angel, in Milton's phrase, "Sheer over the shining battlements of heaven." Sin is not an inherited trait of human nature. It is not a temperamental tendency. Shakespeare sees sin as bad enough to wreck the splendid ship of the soul. It is bad enough to blot the sun from the sky. It is bad enough to break the heart of God. In *Pericles Prince of Tyre* occurs a state-

ment which reminds us of a passage from the Sermon on the Mount. Compare this from Shakespeare, "Few love to hear the sins they love to act," with Christ's soul-searching interrogation, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

Take that passage in Measure for Measure and put it alongside of that philippic of Jesus on hypocrisy in the seventh chapter of Matthew. Shakespeare says of hypocrisy: "O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell, the damnedest body to invest and cover in princely guards." The great Galilean said, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

How sure-footed Shakespeare is as a teacher of righteousness! Take this fine phrase from the Merchant of Venice:

How far that little candle throws his beams;
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In comedy and tragedy, in figure and fact, Shakespeare is always calling the soul toward righteousness. Thus it is that again and again this great book of the soul reminds us of that other greater Book of the soul.

And, of course, as all great literary lights have done, Shakespeare keeps alight the torch of hope. He feels reasons for hope that lie far beyond the reach of reason. His love, as all great loves have done, outgoes his logic. This great dramatist says, in *Henry the Sixth*,

In that hope, I throw mine eyes to heaven,
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.

Paul speaks of hope as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Nothing can steady the heart like hope. A hopeless man is a helpless man. That same stalwart said, "We are saved by hope." I have heard that Hall Caine, when asked for his philosophy of life, said, "We live by hope; no man can live by despair." What a pity that such a philosopher has not given us in his great stories more hope and less despair!

But with a few master strokes Shakespeare has depicted despair. He must have felt its deep, dank shadows to have portrayed it so perfectly. He seems to have followed the wayward footsteps of the soul into the thick of the last, long night. The weird imagery of Poe's "Raven," and the frightful figures of Byron's "Dream of Darkness," and Tennyson's terrible poem on "Despair" might be classed with Shakespeare on the same dark subject in *Richard the Third*. These words from Shake-

speare might have been written of Judas Iscariot:

I shall despair; there is no creature
loves me;
And, if I die, no soul will pity me;
Nay, wherefore should they?
Since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself.

Here it is that the deadly dart of despair strikes home to the central self at last. If Shakespeare did not know in the deeps of personal experience what he here says of despair, then he must have had in marvelous degree what is known in literature as "the experiencing faculty." As a comparative study I subjoin a passage from Tennyson's poem on "Despair." A man and his wife had given up God and hope. Being utterly miserable, they decided to end it all by drowning. The woman drowned, but the man was rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandoned. The rescued man in the second paragraph of Tennyson's poem speaks thus:

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How should I
tell?
Does it matter so much what I felt? You rescued me, yet,
was it well
That you came unwished for, uncalled, between me and the
deep and my doom,
Three days since, three more dark days of the Godless
gloom

SHAKESPEARE AND THE SOUL 97

Of a life without sun, without health, without hope, without
any delight
In anything here upon earth? but ah, God, that night, that
night
When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse there on the fatal
neck
Of land running out into rock—they had saved many hun-
dreds from wreck—
Glared on our way toward death, I remember I thought, as
we passed,
Does it matter how many they saved? we are all of us
wrecked at last!
“Do you fear?” and there came through the roar of the breaker
a whisper, a breath:
“Fear? am I not with you? I am frightened at life, not death.”

Shakespeare, again, had great things to say
about conscience. And it is significant that he
treats it as a matter of experience, and not of
explanation. Hear him in Henry the Eighth:

I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities—
A still and quiet conscience.

But in Richard the Third Shakespeare comes
to a wonderful climax on conscience outraged
and sinned against. Hear this:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale;
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

And what a searching saying is that in
Henry the Sixth!—

Suspicion haunts the guilty mind;
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

Even the still and beautiful star-lit sky breaks suddenly into a million glaring and accusing eyes. Ah, it is so with the sinning soul. Yet it must be that conscience is God's flashlight to show the wicked wanderer the way back through penitence to peace. It is conscience that writes Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. That great poem of Lowell "A Legend of Brittany" is a master's poetic portrayal of remorse. Old huntsmen say that there is odor in the deer's heel by which the hound can scent him to his death.

We must not close without a few of Shakespeare's great flashlights on life. All of these show that his soul was saturated with Scripture. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* he says, "Life is a shuttle." But Job had said centuries before, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." In *Macbeth* Shakespeare says, "Life's but a walking shadow." But that old prince in the land of Uz had said long before concerning the brevity of man's life: "He fleeth also as a shadow." The great bard said of life, "It is a tale." A great Hebrew singer had said centuries before, "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

Nor did Shakespeare himself sing more surely or sweetly of life than our own great and well-beloved Prophet of New England,

Whittier, in this whispered music from the
harp of his heart:

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the wind from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,
Thou, who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be thou my strength and stay.

A STUDY OF SORROW AND THE SOUL

I can still believe that a day comes for all of us, however far off it may be, when we shall understand; when these tragedies, that now blacken and darken the very air of heaven for us, will sink into their places in a scheme so august, so magnificent, so joyful, that we shall laugh for wonder and delight.—*Arthur Christopher Benson.*

HOPE is at the heart of the sorrow that sings. Blank despair is mute. Its fingers thrum no living lyre. No lyrics ripple over its palsied lips. The soul has her moods. Even Byron, Keats, Shelley had their spasms of ecstasy. Self-despair is one thing. Despair of God is another. A Hebrew poet said, "My heart and my flesh fail, but God is the strength of my life." In that is despair of self, but not of God. Despair is not indigenous to the soul. Hope is the plant that springs natal in the heart. Out of the throes of self-despair is born the heavenly hope.

Absolute despair is cold. It kindles no fires on life's altars. It strikes off no sparks of joy from the flinty steeps of the rugged road. Despair sings no songs at sorrow's grave. Its music is a moan. Its shout dies in a stifling sob.

Icebergs break. But they do not break

into flame. The despair poets, while in the mood of despair, have produced no living poetry. Poetry is soul-fuel fanned into flame by heavenly winds. Cold despair may festoon your house with icicles, but it plants no flowers in your garden.

Total despair has no capacity. It is a broken vase that lies shattered among the debris of withered blooms. It is a river between whose naked banks break no singing waves. And may we not believe that at least "a fearful hope" flickers in the spent socket of despair? God clings long and lovingly to the last lingering vestige of life in the soul. If he leave, hope dies.

Emerson's "Threnody" interprets deep sorrow. The "aromatic fire" on the mount and in the meadow reminds him of the radiant fire-spirit of his boy that has vanished, leaving only beautiful ashes. As the anguished father experiences the soothing power of the south wind, the very joy of it makes him sadder as its breath of balm recalls the darling boy who no longer shares with him the chalice of delight. The very sight of the hills enhances the sorrow. Did not the lad he loved once leap and laugh among those hills?

The surpassing value of life was always a cherished thought with Mr. Emerson. With

him "the darling who shall not return" left no equivalent. The soul in its loss is like the wounded spot in the garden whence the lovely flowers have been torn. Only the replacing of the beautiful bloom will heal that wound. The lyric laughter of the happy lad no longer ripples on the morning air. That silence is sorrow distilled. The sudden stillness sickens the heart. Ah, the matchless melody of the lad's glad laughter! Other music the father's ears are yet too dull with grief to hear. Will the caroling call of childish glee never ring through the hills again?

There is no loneliness like the loneliness of love. It ever wakes to watch and wonder. The lullaby of the years will not sing it to sleep. The very lapse of time intensifies the vividness of memory. The footsteps of the years make deep tracks on the soul.

But no good is permanently lost to the good. There is somewhat that never dies. Life and love cling forever to the skirts of God, and we may always touch his seamless robe. The soul is like the tendrils of a vine—they cling closer to the trellis as the summer wears away. But the pain of parting has never found adequate voice. The soul feels what the lips have never spoken. Did not hope project itself into another home of sweet reunions, the losses of

this earthly life were enough to sting the soul to madness. But the laughing streams of solace come leaping from the hills of God into all the valleys of human woe. The sob of grief will blossom into gladness.

Tears have been the fertilizers of earth's fairest gardens. Grief is the plow that has furrowed the fallow soil of the soul and sown it rank with golden harvests. The share of sorrow's plow has cut the soul's subsoil to the world's infinite enrichment. Sorrow mingles her potions with bitter-sweet. With steady hands she holds the brimming chalice to quivering lips because she is the ministrant of love. Sorrow has wrung from her wine-press of woe the wealth and weal of civilization. Much of misery is mercy in disguise. Bloody footprints mark the path that leads to crowns. The only perfect Man the world has ever seen was perfected in the school of sorrow.

Moral crises are the testing and the turning-points in character. Some crisis must come to the soul that makes progress. But peril clings to the skirts of strength. Eliminate personality and you remove the problem of moral peril. Peril hugs the path of personality. Peril hides among the hills and crouches in the valleys, lying in wait for every unwary traveler. Peril prowls in darkness and stalks abroad at noon.

Struggle is God's plan for building the soul to large proportions. Somewhere along the way manhood must meet the angel wrestler. "Ease is the way to disease." "Labor is the life of life." Struggle wins thrones, and struggle must hold them. Weary wrestler, the King went this way before thee. His sacred feet consecrated the rugged road. Only be firm on thy way. It will lead thee under clear skies some day. The straitened steps will yet be light and free. Thy face looks to the summits. Thy feet unfettered will yet climb thither.

"Whatever obstacles control,
Thine hour will come—go on, true soul,
Thou'lt win the prize, thou'lt reach the goal."

We shall all meet the angel of Opportunity. His feet are swift. His wings are like light. His step is, as soft as the creep of a shadow. Do not fail to snatch an arrow from his quiver. It will be needed on life's battlefield. This angel's hands hold implements of toil. With them till thy fields. Gather thy harvests. Garner the ripe grain. Garlands hang thick on this angel's temples. Be not eager for these. When thy work is done he will let them fall upon thy brow. His gifts are like the summer gusts from the fields—take them now, or never.

There is the angel of Duty. The place where he meets thee may be dark and lonely. Some Jabbok of sorrow may roll its turbulent tide near by. But on this spot may be thy Peniel. Darkness will give place to dawn. Gloom will change to splendor. Is the aspect of the angel severe? That look is the symbol of service. Ah, he will press us sore; he will harden the soft palms; he will bruise the pilgrim's feet; he will bend the traveler's back with many a heavy load; but he will plant the sky-ladder at the toiler's feet. Down the shining rungs the angels will come. Up this ladder of light the toiler may ascend.

"For be the duty as angel's flight—

Fulfill it, and a higher will arise,

Even from out its ashes. Duty is our ladder to the skies,
And climbing not, we fall."

Another angel that will meet us is the angel of Conscience. His grip is like the grasp of God. His is the "still small voice," or it is the thunder-speech of the skies. God speaks in the calm of the harvest noon. He speaks across the hurtling storm. His angel of Conscience will meet us on the high hills where the sun shines. He will meet us in the vales where the thick mists hang. He will meet us in the place where birds of joy sing all the day. His voice will ring at the sweet noontide. He will call

in the midnight's sullen gloom. Ah, this angel will have his wrestle with us where the bats cling in dismal shades to broken walls.

Conscience is the touch of God on the soul. As to the nature and the functions of conscience the philosophers do not agree. Let conscience stand for God. Let conscience stand for the gleaming eye that looks guilt out of countenance. Call it the sky-song that steals in to soothe the sobs of penitential grief. Name conscience that celestial pull that holds men back from sin. Let it be the heavenly impulse that moves men on to purity and to peace. Let conscience stand for God.

God's forgiveness always goes deeper than our own. On this point William Dean Howells speaks a deep and weighty word:

Judge me not as I judge myself, O Lord;
Show me some mercy, or I may not live;
Let the good in me go without reward,
Forgive the evil I must not forgive.

To stifle conscience is to spoil character and kill the soul. In his "A Legend of Brittany" Lowell has portrayed the moral tragedy with thrilling accuracy. It is the story of Mordred and Margaret. They met, and Mordred forgot that "he was vowed a monk." "All beauty and all life he was to her." This spell of

youthful love was full of peril. We go at once to the heart of the sad story. Love lost itself in licentiousness. Mordred, passion-blind, feared not the crime, but fronting its dire consequences his soul was appalled. He would hide crime with crime. He would cover with gore the tracks of guilt. That has often been crime's dreadful shift. Wretched man. He forgot that breaking faith with woman's trusting love was breaking faith with God. He writhes under the scorpion's sting. The swift steeds of despair plunge headlong into deeper gulfs of guilt and woe.

All happy sights and sounds now came to him
Like a reproach: he wandered far and wide,
Following the lead of his unquiet whim,
But still there went a something at his side
That made the cool breeze hot, the sunshine dim;
It would not flee, it could not be defied.
He could not see it, but he felt it there,
By the damp chill that crept among his hair.

Was it not the touch of God to bring him back to goodness? But with sullen tread the rebel feet moved on.

Poor Margaret. Where is she? Lonely and sad in the quiet nook where in the days of love's sweet dream they had often met. Let go the harrowing details. They make the heart stagger with deathly sickness. "Enough that Margaret by his mad steel fell." Then,

in the agony and in the moral wreck and confusion that always accompany crime,

. . . beneath the altar there
In the high church the stiffening corpse he hid,
And then, to 'scape that suffocating air,
Like a scared ghoul out of the porch he slid;
But his strained eyes saw blood-spots everywhere,
And ghastly faces thrust themselves between
His soul and hopes of peace with blasting mien.
His heart went out within him like a spark
Dropt in the sea; wherever he made bold
To turn his eyes, he saw, all stiff and stark,
Pale Margaret lying dead; the lavish gold
Of her loose hair seemed in the dark
To spread a glory, and a thousandfold
More strangely pale and beautiful she grew:
Her silence stabbed his conscience through and through.

Ah, how faithful is God! Even from the silent lineaments of death he speaks with the eloquence of life. One's conscience dies hard because one's God never dies. From ghastly glooms he still would woo the soul back to forfeited goodness. It takes the persistent malice of hell to break away from the mercy of God. But the determined touch of crime may tear away at last the clinging tendrils of his love.

"Knocking, knocking, still He's there,
Waiting, waiting, wondrous fair;
But the door is hard to open,
For the weeds and ivy-vine,
With their dark and clinging tendrils,
Ever round the hinges twine."

The infinite eagerness of God to restore the soul is seen in the pain of remorse. It is as if God would sting the lost one back to life rather than let him die. In the very sense of sin the touch of God's love may be traced. The soul may go far away, but he will pursue with more than a father's pity, with more than a mother's compassion. May not remorse be a touch of God's remedial hand? He would have me taste the bitter fruits of evil-doing that I may forsake the way of wickedness. If I betray him he will let me feel the sting of betrayal, if, perchance, falseness pall upon me, and I perforce return to him. Hear Francis Thompson:

I fled him down the nights, and down the days,
I fled him down the arches of the years;
I fled him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the mist of tears
I hid from him, and under running laughter;
Up vistaed hopes I sped, and shot precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears
From those strong feet that followed,
That followed after. But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace, deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat, and a voice beat more instant than the feet—
"All things betray thee who betrayest me."

The sting of death lurks in the serpent of sin. We may not say that God ordains the causes of pain, but pain itself must ofttimes be the order of his love to bring us back to painless peace. Must he not suffer when I suffer?

Who touches me to anguish touches him to pain. I am as "the apple of his eye." In his white palms my poor name is graven. Let shades of night curtain me in darkness. God's hand of love will replenish and light the spent candles on life's broken altars. Then let me sing with Robert Browning in "The Ring and the Book":

I stood at Naples once, a night so dark
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
Anywhere, sky or sea, or world at all;
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,
Through her whole length of mountain visible:
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
And, like a ghost, disshrouded, white the sea.
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.

Long enough to see God is long enough to be saved. That truth is at the heart of love's message. The feet of mercy seek out every pathway that leads to the sufferer's lonely retreat. By every avenue of the soul's experience God seeks to effect a permanent rescue. By the throes of penitence, by the pain of remorse, as well as by the raptures of love he is feeling after us. Would that all men everywhere might sue for peace, and accept his proffered hand. Then would the human struggler be valiant and victorious.

Every highway of human life dips in the dale now and then. Every man must go through the tunnel of tribulation before he can travel on the elevated road of triumph.

The very word "tribulation" is full of interest. It comes to us from the Latin, *tribulum*. That was the name of a harrow, or threshing flail. It was used by the Romans to separate the wheat from the chaff. "*Tribulatio*" was the name that stood for the process. It stands for bruises. It speaks of pain. It mirrors the flail-marks of the soul.

As early as the seventeenth century the genius of George Wither expanded the meaning of this word into a quaint but sweet poem. Hear him sing:

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purgèd from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, there worth is not so much,
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
The value which in threshing they may get.
For till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain affections;
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us
Are by the sacred Spirit winnowed from us;
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,
Yea, till His flail upon us he doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away,

And leave the soul uncovered; nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire—
But then we shall; and this is my desire.

Tribulation is the way of triumph. The valleyway opens into the highway. Tribulation's imprint is on all great things. Crowns are cast in crucibles. Chains of character that wind about the feet of God are forged in earthly flames. No man is greatest victor till he has trodden the winepress of woe. With seams of anguish deep in his brow the "man of sorrows" said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But after this sob comes the psalm of promise, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The footprints are traceable everywhere. Blood marks stain the steps that lead to thrones. Scars are the price of scepters. Our crowns will be wrested from the giants we conquer. Grief has always been the lot of greatness. It is an open secret that

"The mark of rank in nature
Is capacity for pain;
And the anguish of the singer
Makes the sweetest of the strain."

Struggle is seen in nature. The tiny seed is buried in the soil. To come to its place of floral ministry it must master something. The life-force in its heart must lift itself up against

the pull of gravitation. It must thrust aside the pressing clods and push its head into the light. Its triumph is through tribulation.

No flight were possible to the bird did not the air resist the pressure of its pinions. The measure of its success is the degree of resistance overcome. Its flight is free because the law of tribulation prevails.

Even the electric flash across the cloud has tribulation. Its line is direct till it reaches a condensed stratum of air which forces it aside. Thence the subtle force leaps till it reaches another such stratum, and on to the end of its swift career. The history of the zigzag lightning-flash is a history of tribulation.

The law of tribulation is easily traced in mechanical appliances. Consider the secret of the balloon's ascension. The confined gas tries to escape. The enveloping canvas strives to overcome that tendency. Neither force is complete master, yet the approximate success of each lifts the balloon to its dizzy heights. The success issues from tribulation.

Let the wheel testify. What does it witness? Its circular success is due to the opposition of two forces. The centripetal force would hold everything to the center. The centrifugal force would hurl everything from the center. The resultant is revolution. This is the secret of

the wheel. Its revolution is a revelation of success through tribulation.

Trace the law still higher. It runs through the history of exploration. Columbus, Livingstone, Stanley all triumphed through nameless tribulation. The mightiest manhood is born amid the throes of struggle.

Take the inventors. Their way has not been flower-strewn—Morse, Fulton, Field, Bell, Edison, and a thousand others have come out of great tribulation to scepter, throne, coronation.

Tribulation has always marked the trail of the true reformer. It is the story of Paul, Luther, Savonarola, Knox, Wesley, Wycliff, Huss, and all the rest of the mighty army. They came through great tribulation to their place of power among men.

The history of literature is a record of sublime and sorrowful struggle. Every great book has been written with the author's blood. We may point to these princes of the pen, and say truthfully of them, "These are they which come out of great tribulation." That statement applies to every great book, to every great man, to every great institution, and to every great civilization in the history of mankind. Who was the peerless poet of the Greeks? Homer. But that illustrious singer was blind. Who wrote the fadeless dream of Pilgrim's

Progress? A prince in royal purple upon a couch of ease? Nay. The trailing splendor of that vision gilded the dingy walls of old Bedford Jail while John Bunyan, a princely prisoner, a glorious genius, made a faithful transcript of the scene. His body was imprisoned, but his soul was unfettered.

Thomas Carlyle said that "ten silent centuries found a voice in Dante." How? Through ease? Through luxury? Never. He was lacerated by sharp criticisms. He was buffeted and bruised. He was hunted like a beast from hillside to hillside. Storms smote him. Black nights of sorrow sobbed their dirges across his suffering soul. It was then that Dante smote his harp. In such a night that Italian hero sang for the ages. That is the story of genius. That is the heart of heroism.

It is not material achievement, but the soul's sublime effort that counts most with God. The heroic reach of the honest heart may please him more than the actual achievement of the hand.

"Great is the facile conqueror:
Yet haply he, who, wounded sore,
Breathless, unhorsed, all covered o'er
With blood and sweat,
Sinks foiled, but fighting evermore—
Is greater yet."

A LITERARY SEARCHLIGHT OF THE SOUL—ROBERT BROWNING

Browning has a wonderful gift of soul-penetration, of looking into and through other persons. He divines what they are, how they think, and what they are worth, with the swift, sure eye of keenest inspiration.—*George Willis Cooke.*

THE soul is more than anything that anybody can say about the soul. The supreme speech of the soul is hardly formulable. It is not a writing, but a voice. Its essence is not expressible in letters or symbols. There is no telltale speech that can tell the soul's great story. The soul is the one subject that is great enough for God to study. Is it any wonder that it baffled the searchlight speech of Browning? In searching for Robert Browning we must always remember that Robert Browning is searching for the soul. Browning is in earnest even when he is joking. His byplay is a wonderful sort of work. There are tears in his laughter. And there is always laughter in his tears.

He never leaves us sobbing over incurable griefs. Thank God, he has caught the far-off clue to the full and final solution of it all. And where the pulse of power is too dim to see

still he feels the eternal undertow of truth. He may begin his quest in the lowest foothills of life, but he is headed for the high Sierras of the soul. He goes into the tangled thickets of life, but be sure he will find "the clearing." Fear not to stand with him in the black night of grief, for he will find the daydawn and God. Browning has a genius for finding God. He finds his footsteps in the sand when seas of sorrow have washed them too dim for common eyes to see. He turns his searchlight across the black of starless skies and they break into everlasting bloom. Again, and again, and again, that is Robert Browning. He is always finding hope and life at the very heart of despair and death. That is why so many earnest souls dig in his literary loam as miners dig for gold. That is why truth-seekers search his sayings as astronomers search the night skies for stars.

The realizations of the soul are always more than the revelations of the soul. I have beheld the sea, but I have seen only a small portion of the sea. Still I am certain that all the sea is of a kind with that portion I have seen. I have not seen the sun. It is too vast for my small eyes to see. I have seen only a segment of the sun. I have seen only a segment of the sky. But am I not saying truth when I say that I

have seen the sea, the sun, the sky? Is any man at fault, then, if he only partly tells what no man can wholly see? My business is to say my say in my own best way. That is what Browning did. And his way is a great way, as in "Instans Tyrannus," "Christmas Eve," "Saul," "The Boy and the Angel," "Prospice," and many parts of "The Ring and the Book." Almost every line of "Pippa Passes" is aglow with light and palpitant with power. No man can go into the thick of Browning and not feel the battle moods of his might and hear his clarion call to goodness, and hear the *obbligato* of the *soul*, and not know the lift of his love-life.

Few men have told all they have seen. And no man has told all that he has felt. There are overtones and undertones in life which are unwordable. Did not a great apostle declare that he had heard in "the third heavens" things which human language could not utter? And did not Tennyson feel the transcendency of truth when, at the sea's edge, he sang:

Break, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Experience is one thing, adequate expression is another. Expression always goes limp when dealing with the high things of the heart. No

student can tell the whole story of the things that he studies. The unwordable always lies back of the wisest and weightiest words. Some of Browning's sayings seem strange because we are unfamiliar with the life-secret he is seeking to tell. What botanist has told the whole story of the fields and the flowers? What astronomer has told the whole story of the stars of the sky? Listening up the stairways of the soul, the greatest auditors have left something unheard, the greatest seers have left something unseen, the greatest singers have left something unsung. The poet feels more than he phrases. It is not easy to write life into language. Who could write all the heart's lyrics of laughter? Who shall set all life's sorrows to song? It was Wordsworth who spoke of "The still, sad music of humanity." It is not easy even for Browning to sing all of the soul into song. The Sons of God sang together, but even they did not altogether sing it all. The greatest Teacher did not say all his say to all because his high speech could not be borne by the lowly listeners. It is hardly fair to expect the greatest *human* genius to be *more* than human. When the skylark soars out of sight we do not blame him for not soaring higher. We do not fault the sky because our short sight must stop with the sky-line. If we look

long enough at a great mountain we shall grow somewhat toward its greatness. That is a good way to deal with Browning's bigness. The mountain winds blow through many rough and rugged places, but they are wondrous winds when they waft across the weary trailsman's brow. The winds that blow from the towering peaks of Browning's poesy throb with truth and pulse with power.

If Robert Browning pushed a thousand things clear over the edge, it is because he pushed far enough to find the edge. A wheel may whirl so fast that it seems to stand still. But you can tell it is going when you touch it. That whirling wheel may make your hand hot, or it may take the skin off, or it may break a bone, but the wheel is whirling, you are sure of that. Then when the flaming chariot of song stands still, you stand by the singer's side looking long and far out into the skies of the soul. He will always show you what is worth seeing if only you will follow him. Little things will look less and large things will look larger after you have looked awhile at them with Browning's sure-seeing eyes.

Some people can understand a picture who cannot understand a philosophy. Some can understand song who do not understand science. But such people understand as intelligently as

some other people understand. The scientist has no necessary monopoly on the sky simply because he is studying the stars. The spirit of poesy may catch a finer meaning from the stars than the telescope. The spirit of poesy may see in "the meanest flower that blows thoughts too deep for tears" while the mere analyst sees only microbes through the microscope. That thought is worth thinking about in these scientific days. The difficulty of understanding anything is as often conditioned in the peculiar limitations of the person who seeks to understand as it is in the nature of the thing to be understood. A star is not at fault because it is too far away for any telescope to reach. The song-sparrow must not be scolded because his twilight music is not heard by ears that are deaf. Let some megaphone help the dull ear.

It is safe to say that when Browning paints a picture it will pay us to look till we see it. When he sings it will pay us to listen till we hear. Gold mines are worth discovering. New worlds are worth finding. Kingdoms are worth conquering. If we go afield with Browning, we shall find fruits and flowers of bewildering lusciousness and beauty. If we go mountain-climbing with him, we shall feel and hear the musical sweep of celestial winds.

He helps us to see the unusual in common-

places. He sings discords into harmony. He paints unsightliness into symmetry and beauty. He shows us the splendors of life streaming in among the sullen shadows of death. He disentangles for us many a knotted skein of disappointment and despair. And is not all of this ministry wondrously worth while? He is God's trailsman among the mountains of life showing us the way to the summits. And do not we fog-blinded valley folk need that?

Browning puts a fresh appraisalment on life and its divine program. He points out its undying sources of everlasting strength and joy. I go to him as I go to the sea, not for science or technicalities, but for the freshening of faith; to get away from my blistering deserts of despair. I go to get again his full, far, and clear look at life. I go a sea voyaging once again with him and God. Listen, for the song of this brave and blessed bard is now singing in my soul:

What's life to me?
Where'er I look is fire; where'er I listen,
Music; and where I tend, bliss evermore.

III
THE SKYWARD LOOK FROM
SCRIPTURE

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet.—*Poet David.*

The Book enlarges like a heightening sky.—*Joseph Parker.*

HIS WORD

THE Word that sounds across the years,
Speaks of eternal things,
And hushes all our sobbing fears
With love's sweet whisperings;
It is the "Forward, march!" of Him
Who leads the mighty throngs,
When all our earthly skies go dim
With clouds of darkest wrongs.

His Word that gives the high command
Sounds through the nations still;
All good is guided by His hand,
And girded by His will;
His voice spoke through the Prophet's word
To set the ages right,
And now earth's peoples all are stirred
By movings of His might.

THE SCRIPTURE SETTING OF LIFE

Bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God.—*Prophet Samuel.*

He hath set eternity in their heart.—“*Koheleth.*”

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

THE lapidary does not give the jewel an inferior setting. Its value is great and it must have a setting commensurate with its cost. Great is the jewel of life, and the great Giver of life has given it adequate and significant setting. Even in the lower levels of fitness that principle of propriety would be expected. The costliest stones are not set in brass signet rings. The most valuable watch works are not set in pewter cases.

The Scripture setting of life is unmatched by measureless distances in any literature—as *literature*. This Scripture literary handling of life is transcendent and unique. It brings us into unearthly and eternal significances. There is no trifling here. The themes are world-themes, prodigious problems, and deathless destinies. The literature as literature is historical, philosophical, dramatic, lyrical, epistolary, essay, and epic. Here are unequaled

stories of love, life, hopes, despairs, joys, sorrows, sin, and salvation. These mighty seas of human experience are at high tide with tragedies and triumphs. And surging through it all, like the underswell of the sea, we feel the mighty movements of an all-masterful mind. Running through this literary life is a redemptive spirit eternally earnest on setting right the deep disorders of the world. The deepest shadows are in the pictures here, but the highest high-lights are also here. This whole literature is saturated with a spirit which is ceaselessly busy in the recovery of infinite values. We feel that the stylus of the Infinite Spirit must have written this living literature.

The Scriptures give to life a *largeness* of setting which is not found in other literatures. No "narrow neck of land" is here for the staging of the soul. "Thou hast set me in a large place." The grants of God are not cramped corners, but kingdoms. The ranges for the soul are wider than sky-wide spaces. In this literature the soul's relationships reach beyond earthly boundary lines. The soul's spheres of relationships and activities are not local. Man's responsibilities are cosmopolitan because he is a cosmopolite. His sympathies must be as wide as the world's suffering. His

service must be as far-reaching as the world's need. In all this Scripture setting of a man's life we find a largeness of relationship and responsibility, of sympathy and service which are not found in other literatures.

As to duration the Scriptures give life an *eternal* setting. The stamp of eternity is on my soul and I cannot rub it out. I am going to be *somewhere* and *somehow* endlessly. That is plainly the setting that this literature gives to my life. The winds of eternity brush my brow. This whole business of life is no temporary affair. Death is incidental. The thing of chief significance is life. Let us keep to the main issue. Let us be about our business, the big business of living. We need not be side-tracked by any of the toys or trinkets of time—"Arise, let us be going."

The Scriptures give life a *spiritual setting* of supreme significance. The thing of outstanding significance is the regnancy of the spirit. In all literature the Bible is the spiritual specialist. Spirit supremacy is the keynote of the whole Scripture song. "I keep my body under"—that is the militant message of Paul. "We are clothed upon," but the clothing is not we. Flesh is fitting fabric for my spirit here, but there is eternal difference between my *clothes* and my *spirit*.

SCRIPTURE SETTING OF LIFE 129

This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise,
To seize the everlasting prize.

That is right. This body is my robe, but it is not I. I know that I am something infinitely *other* than flesh and blood. The tree's life surges up through the roots, but the roots are not the tree's life. The life runs through the fiber, the leaf, the bloom, but even the life of a tree is wholly something other than any of these. I have not seen this tree life, but I am sure—absolutely sure that it is there, because I see its living banners of leaf and blossom waving in the wind. I am neither deceived nor fooled about this. I know the tree's life is a fact. My mind sees that fact as clearly as my bodily eyes see the material facts of leaf and bark and bloom. On this much ordinary sanity must insist. I further know that this fact of a tree's life is the most significant fact about the tree. I know that the only accounting possible for root and bark and leaf and blossom must be based on this fundamental fact of the tree's *life*.

Flesh is a fact. Flesh is a phenomenon. A phenomenon is not primary, but secondary. My soul is "prime minister" of the body. It is the fundamental fact that accounts for the secondary fact of the flesh. I know that I know this about my soul. I take my stand

here till the heavens roll together as a scroll.
Why? *Because there is no other sure standing
ground for my soul.*

To man propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Spiritual supremacy—that is the Scripture setting of life.

After the order of human reckoning life lays hold of us from three points—the past, the present, and the future. How does the literature of Scripture deal with life as related to these points? Does this literature of life make satisfactory disposition of the PAST? Sometimes ghostly hands of memory clutch us out of the past. There was something even in Paul's past that he would gladly forget. Looking into her past, Lady Macbeth could not sweeten the blood smell on her hands by all the perfumes of Arabia. Many a ghost has walked through the nightmares of the criminal's dream-times. How to lay these guilty ghosts of the past—men would give crowns and kingdoms for satisfying answer to that torturing question.

On a Western prairie in a little country schoolhouse occurred one of those dark county-seat tragedies. A man was slain in that schoolhouse and a spot on the floor was soaked

with his blood. The place was scrubbed, but the stain held fast. Little school children took fright and fled at sight of that spot. Country folk who came to the little schoolhouse on Sabbath to worship Him who said, "Thou shalt not kill" grew uneasy at sight of that deadly stain on the floor. Then some kind man tried to cut that stain out with a keen-bladed knife, but the knife scars were constant reminders of the bloody deed which had been committed there. Then the schoolhouse was abandoned and a new one was erected in another place where little children could study or play in peace, and where men and women could worship God without being haunted with the awful sense of murder. But are there not bloodstains in memory that will not out? Are there not stains in our past that no knife of resolution or regret can cut away?

Sad memory weaves
No veil to hide the past.

No happiness is possible without some placating provision for that past. This Scripture literature points out such provision. It teaches divine forgiveness for our guilty past. A Voice of infinite fatherliness and motherliness speaks through these pages, saying, "I will remember them no more." There is no other way but that to give peace to the tor-

tured memory of man concerning his guilty past. On these pages Some One has been writing in crimson headlines the unforgettable words, "I will blot out thy transgressions." What else could be done with them that would take the infinite sting from the sinner's soul?

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

This is too great to explain, but, seeing that it is God's plan, it is too good *not to be true*. The closer we keep to the simplest and sweetest things in the truest and best human hearts the nearer we shall grasp this wonder of love. Would not the human father, if he could, blot out his prodigal son's past? Would not the real mother blot out the poor prodigal daughter's past? The infinite Father's heart is the fountain whence all human loves have come. It is his lips of love that drink away the dead seas of our dark despairs.

Mother love made the wonder plain to the little lad waiting at her knee. His childish heart had been staggered by the celestial rhetoric of the promise, "I will blot out thy transgressions." "What does it mean, mother?" he ventured. She bade him bring his slate, telling him to make all sorts of crooked and

unsightly lines over it. He obeyed. Then she passed a clean moist sponge over the slate and all the ugly marks that he had made were gone. "My precious boy," said the wise mother, "that is what God does with our transgressions when he *blots them out*." No book of theology or science or philosophy or psychology could have made it half so plain. Through that mother's heart of love her little lad saw the truth of Eternal Love. Alas! great philosophers have lived and died without seeing that.

This Scripture setting with reference to life's past is unique in literature. It is the only one that sweetens bitter memories, the only one that retrieves past losses, and the only one that redresses past wrongs. Life would be forever out of plumb without this Scripture scheme to swing it into balance. The man who catches this perspective of life's past—no matter how the ghosts of memory may stoop among the shadows—may still meet the present and the future with a calm and courageous heart.

What is the Scripture setting of life's throbbing *present*? It is plainly Janus-faced and looks both ways. The present must look both ways to see the truth about life. The present is the chink between the two logs of the past and the future in this house of life. The present life of every man is a point at which

past influences which have not been shaken off come to culmination. Every man's present must be defined partially at least in terms of the past. You cannot understand any man's present without reckoning with a thousand conditions and influences in his past. If we are to understand any man's *to-days*, we must reckon with the teachers of his *yesterdays*. The childhood conditions of every man's past lay their fashioning hands on the adult conditions of his present. Not in any fatalistic way is this to be taken. It is simply a rational recognition of the familiar law of sequence. The Scripture statement of this law is old and familiar—"Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap." Yesterday's sowings are to-day's reapings. To-morrow's reapings will be from the sowings of to-day. So far as character and destiny are concerned this is the Scripture setting of life's whole story. Because this law is as true with good as it is with evil it rallies our hearts to high heroisms. Evil can be overcome with good. This sends us singing into the tasks of to-day and up the hill slopes of to-morrow.

"Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it!
Boldness has genius, power, magic in it!
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;
Begin it, and the work will be completed."

How does this Scripture setting of life deal with the *future*? Does it differ from other literary records about life? To look at the other literary records is to answer that question. Cæsar held that "death ends all." The elder Pliny praised suicide. Lucretius called immortality a silly delusion. The future of Buddhistic literature is a Nirvana of nothingness. In short, all literatures unlighted by the Scripture spirit are overdomed by starless and sunless skies, so far as futurity is concerned. The Scriptures touch the future with the finger of unfaltering certainty. Feel the thrill of these Scripture touches: "I shall be satisfied when I awake." The epic poet of the Hebrews said, "I shall see God." And he made this declaration with reference to postmortem experience.

The gospel literature, which is the out-flowering of the spirit of Christ in the writer, advances toward the future with still surer step. Hear these trumpet tones: "Though a man were dead, yet if he believe in me he shall live again." "He that believeth in me shall never die." The Patmos prophet saw into a future world and shouted across the centuries, "There shall be no night there," as if he would say: "I am the Columbus of spiritual realms, and I have found a new world. This new world which I have dis-

covered is sinless, nightless, painless, tearless." Well, that will certainly be a new set of conditions. We have never seen any country like that here. We have never been out of the sound of crying and we have always been in sight of tears. This message of the Patmos prophet is surely something new for this old world. Running through this Scripture literature—and this is the point that I am making—there is a light that was never struck from earthly sources. It is a light peculiar to this literature. It is not characteristic of other literatures unfed of these far-away fountains. Other literatures fumble awkwardly at the gates of the future. They are un-at-home with this whole subject, and, like some lost child, they cry aloud toward the pitiless dark of unanswering skies. Such a cry is constantly breaking from the poetic pages of the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam. It is the piteous cry of a soul that has lost its way. It is the fearsome cry of a child that is lost in the dark. And I give these lines here as fairly representative of all literatures on this subject when unlighted by the Scriptures. Here is Omar's cry in the dark:

Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears
To-DAY of past regrets and future fears;
To-morrow!—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Seven thousand Years.

SCRIPTURE SETTING OF LIFE 137

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

Alike for those who for To-DAY prepare,
And those that after some To-MORROW stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries,
“Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There.”

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discussed
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scattered, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

There is no *sky* in this kind of literature. Why should it have been so in vogue in certain quarters for these many years? The skies of the soul are the only skies that hold fadeless stars. My destiny is not in the *dust*. I am a quenchless *spirit*. That is the truth that needs to take hold of the restless heart of this age. My spirit must draw life—eternally enduring life—from the currents which flow from the Infinite Spirit. I shall spring out of the dust and walk among the stars. I refuse to be a grub and make my bed in the mud. I

will work my wings. The lift has not gone out of them yet—nor will it ever go. My soul will have a *sky* and it shall blossom with eternal stars. That is the Scripture setting of life.

Only yesterday we lost from our New England folk a beautiful spirit of poesy. He had hardly gone far enough into life to brush the dew from the grass. But he had caught the supernal vision. He heard rolling from the eternal hills the high slogan of the *soul*. He walked amid the music of the mountain winds and struck the harp of his heart to deathless song. I set the triumphant notes of "The Tenant" of Frederic Lawrence Knowles singing here to offset Omar's sobbing in the dark:

This body is my house—it is not I;
Herein I sojourn till, in some far sky,
I lease a fairer dwelling, built to last
Till all the carpentry of time is past.
When from my high place viewing this lone star,
What shall I care where these poor timbers are?
What though the crumbling walls turn dust and loam—
I shall have left them for a larger home.
What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot,
When earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot!
When thou, clay cottage, fallest, I'll immerse
My long-cramp'd spirit in the universe,
Through uncomputed silences of space
I shall yearn upward to the leaning face.
The ancient heavens will roll aside for me,
As Moses monarched the dividing sea.
This body is my house—it is not I.
Triumphant in this faith I live, and die.

DREAMERS

Behold, this dreamer cometh.—*Gen. 37. 19.*

There is nothing so striking as a dreamer in action.—
Victor Hugo.

THE best dreamers are the widest awake. The soul has eyes that see without the optic nerve. The spirit may be sleepless while the body slumbers. A boy who became prime minister of Egypt had a dream. That dream of the harvest scene was no idle fancy. It was no delusion. The dream of that boy was the vision of a seer. It was the grip of power on his soul. That psychic look was no wild-eyed stare into vacuity. God's apocalypse had swept the dreamer's soul.

That truth threads the centuries. Saint Peter's towered first in some great builder's dreaming soul. Columbus had a vision of the New World before his feet pressed the material continent. A thousand wonders have trooped by in panoramic procession in that wizard laboratory of Thomas Edison. The oratorio of Elijah first rolled its thunder-music across the dream-rapt soul of the great composer. To the inner vision of the artist, Beauty walked in queenly robes upon the naked canvas.

"Visions come and go,
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng,
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song."

Thanks to the dreamers for waking a sleeping world. Westminster Abbey of England, the Castles of Holyrood and Stirling in Scotland, the Tuileries and Louvre of France, Russia's Kremlin, Spain's Alhambra; and in Venice the Palace of the Doges; the Blue Tower of Copenhagen; and Constantinople's Saint Sophia—these are all the products of mighty dreamers.

Charlemagne dreamed, and the Roman empire throbbed into life. Peter dreamed, and Russia woke. Sweden is the dream of Adolphus. In psychic vision William the Silent saw the Holland that was to be. Victor Emmanuel saw the coming Italy. Bismarck realized his dream in uniting the scattered states of Germany. Abraham Lincoln saw in vision a fetterless nation. He saw in fact the shackles fall.

Astronomy is the realized dream of Kepler, Copernicus, Brahe, Galileo. The soul sees stars that swim beyond the reach of telescopes.

Electricity, in its present relations to science and commerce, is but the fulfillment of the prophetic dreams of scientific seers. Let history

call the roll. A few names will do to conjure with. There are Stephen, and Franklin, and Gray, and Galvani; Faraday, Wheatstone, Morse, Edison, Reis, Bell, Roentgen—wide-awake dreamers.

The dreamers have struck the loftiest music from the harp of the soul. They must be credited with having produced the wealth of the world's literature.

Stand with uncovered head in the presence of the dreaming seer while he hurls this question into the face of the future: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra, this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" Then hear the heroic reply as it comes singing from the guileless lips of the Son of man: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Ah, the dreamers have ever been the wide-awake watchers on the towers of truth. They catch the first note of the future's victory-psalm. They scent the fragrance of the bloom that is to be. The future is the footfall of God coming to meet the forward step of man.

"Every hope which rises and grows broad
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams
From the great heart of God."

More than once the face of God has looked out from the crises of history. That face has flashed

a searchlight on the nations. That is the only light that can solve the problems of the race.

In times when men have been dumb with dread the Sky-Voice has spoken. But, as of old, men only said, "It thundered." They have been blind to the "heavenly vision." They have been deaf to God's great voice. But that voice still sounds across the years. *He that hath ears to hear*, let him hear. In these six lines from Aldrich there is a message:

In youth, beside the lonely sea,
Voices and visions came to me.

In every wind I felt the stir
Of some celestial messenger.

Full dark shall be the days in store,
When voice and vision come no more.

HOLDEN EYES

But their eyes were holden.—*Luke 24. 16.*

What shall I see, if ever I go

Over the mountains high?

Now I can see but their peaks of snow,

Crowning the cliffs, where the pine trees grow;

Waiting and watching to rise,

Nearer and nearer the skies.—*Björnson.*

Alas for him who never sees

The stars shine through his cypress trees.

—*Whittier.*

WRONG perspective is the malady of mankind. We are nearsighted, farsighted, cross-eyed, color-blind, or stone blind. Our eyes are holden. We lack vision. That is the trouble with us all.

The truest seeing is not with the eyesight. Vision is of the soul. The heart-pure are blessed, for they see—they see God. All the world is dark when the heart is blind. The spendthrift-splendor of the midday sun shines in vain.

Some eyes are holden by the hand of sensual pleasure. Some are holden by the hand of prejudice. Some are held by the grip of greed. Many are blinded by the gods of the world.

Vital forces elude the sight of the bodily eyes. The optic nerve sees things in the gross.

The soul sees essences. Life looks out upon us from every turn in the road. But she often hides under many a sweet disguise. She is real, even when she is unrealized. The sensitive heart can feel the measured throb of her holy hand. Credibility does not depend upon tangibility. The touch of hearts is as real as the touch of hands.

Going to Emmaus the hearts of the disciples burned by the way as they held high converse about the wondrous Stranger. He had recently vanished from their delighted view. Whither had he gone? The query was pointed with pain. His warm breath breathed on them then, though they knew it not. The Teacher was on that lonely road, but the puzzled pilgrims, not aware of his presence, wrestled with their problems. Ample help was at hand, but they availed not themselves of the mighty ministry. The Comforter bore them company, but these sad men with holden eyes had no surcease of sorrow. The Rest-Giver was in reach, but on they trudged aweary still. The hand of healing was close enough to touch, but sorrow's wounds were yet agape.

“The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.”

The real does not always appear. What appears is not always real. There are optical illusions. Things are not always what they seem. But there is always something better for us than the things we see. Insight is better than eyesight. It was Jesus and the great Jew of Tarsus who taught us to look behind veils. It is safer to trust soul-sight than it is to trust eyesight. The soul is the real seer. If men will earnestly look for God, he will appear somehow, somewhere. He does not always appear where we most expect him. Sometimes he appears most where we least expect him. To see God anywhere is a sight worth the seeing. Alas that some should never look to see him anywhere! No man will ever see as he ought till he sees him. But there are souls that are visional. They are not the visionary idlers of the world's playground. Their ken uncovers the unseen verities.

"There are who, like the seer of old,
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life's rugged mountainside
Is white with many an angel tent."

The vision of the invisible waits for the wide-awake soul. The poet sees a thousand things which do not appear to unobserving eyes. What we touch with our hands is not always closest to our hearts. It is, after all,

the intangible that moves us most. The sights that the soul sees are those that stir us to high endeavor. It was the vision of the invisible that nerved Moses to masterful endurance.

To the soul that has vision this is never the only world. John Keats, the poet, wrote to a brother in America, "I feel more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone, but in a thousand worlds."

Sometimes the valley-ways of earth are shadow-filled. Sometimes the swirling storms of dust hide every star. The winds moan. Darkness swathes the world. The spirit of man staggers amid the gloom. Still the soul may see. The God of these shadows is the God of the soul. In the night he giveth songs. Listen:

"Though time may dig the grave of creeds,
And dogmas wither in the sod,
My soul will keep the thought it needs—
Its swerveless faith in God.

"No matter how the world began,
Nor where the march of science goes,
My trust in something more than man
Shall help me bear life's woes."

But seeing is not always believing. One may see and not believe. One may believe and not see. Mary saw Jesus at the sepulcher. She

did not believe it was he. Thomas saw Jesus, but he wanted further evidence before he would believe.

Believing is often the condition of seeing. We believe the truth-teller. Then we believe the truth. We believe the guide. Then we see the path. The vision of faith does not depend upon what the eyes see, but what the soul sees.

Some kind of belief is necessary to sanity. Total unbelief would be total insanity. Believing on sufficient ground is a rational process. It is not less rational because it is psychic.

Sheer belief as an act of intelligence is as necessary to the progress of science as it is to the progress of Christianity. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" is a statement of wide application. It will be seen some day that Jesus always had the keenest scientific insight. His sight always went straight to the soul of things.

Historic knowledge roots itself in the belief of recorded facts. The student of history must base the most of his knowledge on the testimony of others. Intellect cannot escape from that.

The scientist sees certain phenomena. On this vision of the visible is conditioned his

belief in the existence of the invisible. The astronomer must trust his telescope. The biologist must believe his microscope. The chemist must give credence to the tales that are told in acids and crucibles. The geometrician must believe Euclid. The Christian must believe Christ.

If we always doubt, we must always be in the dark. Doubt is despair. Doubt is death. The soul can believe against odds if it will. Difficulties and hard problems are a part of our earthly heritage. They will not all leave while we stay here. That is the sound postulate of reason and of the soul. The difficulties of unbelief are far greater than those of belief. The man who looks into the face of the sun and doubts it is no more a fool than the man who looks into the face of the soul and doubts that. To insist that the sun shall hang forever in midsky is to play the role of a madman. To wait till the dawn of all earth's morrows is to be an idler all the day. The light of to-day will be enough for the labor of to-day. Up, then, my soul, and at thy task! The work of life is eternally cumulative.

"I have a life in Christ to live;
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply?

Nay; rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear thine awful voice repeat,
In gentle accents heavenly sweet,
'Come unto me and rest;
Believe me and be blest.'"

THE MINISTRY OF MERCY

New every morning.—*Prophet Jeremiah.*

Blessed are the merciful.—*Jesus of Galilee.*

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.—*Jehovah.*

It distilleth as the gentle dew.—*William Shakespeare.*

If one is good there is no end to good things. There is an infinite series of goodness. God has not made anything common or unclean. The least things always seem better to the best man than the greatest things do to the worst man. The Midas touch gets into human experience. The soul whose touch turns things to gold will always be rich. His sustenance will not fail. His meat is to do the will of Him that sent him.

What my life gives off will come back to it some time with interest. The tide will come in with larger volume than it went out. The fountain flings its spray skyward. But the silver showers fall back again on the fountain. The boomerang flies back to the hand that flung it. The vulture returns to the carrion. The bee goes back to the honey.

We are in the midst of a universal ministry. That is one of the secrets disclosed by the great Jew of Tarsus. He said, "All things

work." See that circle grow. "All things work *together.*" In the "all things" is universality. In the "together" is method. But still the circle widens. "All things work together for *good.*" In that is purpose. And purpose discloses personality. Yet another horizon is seen by the outward sweep of the circle. "All things work together for good *to them that love God.*" In the last five words is the law of conditionality. There is the Godward side of man's work and the manward side of God's work. The man may acquiesce or he may rebel. There was no discord in the world's music till the hand of sin smote the harp-strings of the soul. No noxious weeds grew in God's garden till the adversary sowed the tares. The fountains of love were as sweet as the dew till an enemy embittered the waters. Man has marred the masterpieces of his Master. Strange and sad as it is, man can undo what it takes God to do.

There is a presiding Personality over men and things. The bard of Avon spoke truth when he said,

There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

The forces that play upon us are from everything we touch. God calls everything to serve him and man. Things do not work at

random. There is divine harmony everywhere, could we but catch the music. Nothing *happens* in the spheres of the divine activity. Purpose may be traced in every corner of creation.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the
suns.

To be able to trace that purpose is to untangle many a puzzle of Providence.

A thousand things can be accomplished by genius which ordinary mortals can never hope to achieve. The ministries of genius are mixed with mysteries which the rank and file can never comprehend. But the purpose of the genius is easily traced when the effect of his work is seen. Despite the fact that we are familiar with the general appearance of the phonograph, mystery is at its heart. But when we hear the voice of an old friend reproduced in speech or song we discern in that the purpose of the inventor. From the verge of ordinary limitations that talking machine is not only incomprehensible, but impossible. Yet to the genius in whose prolific brain it was born it is simple and easy of construction. His genius awes us. Our stupidity amazes him.

Let that illustration suggest the hiatus be-

tween the intelligence and power of God and the ignorance and weakness of man. It is only a pot of paint that the pupil sees at the side of Raphael's easel. But in that same unsightly mass the great artist sees the sweet Madonna. We see the under side of the cloud. We say the world is dark. We hold that it is sundown everywhere. But on the upper side of the same cloud the suns and stars of a thousand centuries are shimmering. We interpret life and its experiences from the under side. That side is always in the shadow. God interprets life from the upper side. That side is always crystal clear. We see the tangled threads. He sees the warp and woof woven into beauty. A poet sings the music of the mystery:

“My life is but a weaving
 Between my God and me;
 I may not choose the colors—
 He worketh steadily.
 Full oft he weaveth sorrow,
 And I, in foolish pride,
 Forget he sees the upper,
 And I the under side.

“I choose the strands all golden,
 And watch for woven stars;
 I murmur when the pattern
 Is set in blurs and mars.
 I cannot yet remember
 Whose hands the shuttles guide;
 And that my stars are shining
 Upon the upper side.

“My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me;
I see the seams, the tangles—
The fair design sees he.
Then let me wait with patience,
And blindness, satisfied
To make the pattern lovely
Upon the upper side.”

The manifestations of love are not always mild. Not realizing this, I think we often misread the message of mercy. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The most of our puzzles grow out of the fact that we do not comprehend the chastenings of compassion. Idle indulgence is not mercy. It appears rude and ruthless to me when I see the florist tearing the shrubs and flowers from their loam-love in the garden. But when I see them by and by in the greenhouse blooming in their beauty, and sheltered from frost and storm, I know that the uprooting process of the florist was the process of love. I saw the act, but I did not see the purpose of the actor. But in the after-light of truth I discovered the secret of sympathy.

A lad with a breaking heart is standing outside the operating room. A kindly surgeon in that room is amputating the right arm of the child's father. To the immature mind of the

boy the deed is ghastly and cruel. Nothing could be farther removed from love. So the perplexed little sufferer thought. But in the after-light of experience, he saw even in that the secret of love. His childish ignorance had misread the record of mercy. Ofttimes it must be so that our Divine Surgeon sits beside our beds of pain and whispers in words of love, "What I do thou knowest not now."

POINTS ON POWER

I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord.—*Prophet Micah, 3. 8.*

A man's power is his idea, multiplied by and projected through his personality.—*Phillips Brooks.*

THE central source of all power is God. He is the fountain head whence spring all the rivers of might.

No man has created an ounce of power. A man may use it. He may abuse it. No man can make power. In any degree it is a great gift. With power a man may climb to heaven or crawl to hell. Paul had power. When he turned it against God it struck him down, swooning and blind. When he used it for God it made him a master among men. The Son of the morning had power. He perverted it. Perverted power made him the Prince of darkness. The might that would make a man may mar an angel.

Nothing is sought so much as power. Men ally themselves to various forms of energy for material gain. They have discovered that the power of God in the wind may be used to profit. Thus they set sail to ships. They build a wheel and hang it aloft that the winds of God may pump water for their cattle. The

power of water whirls the wheels of commerce. Hydraulic pressure is God's pressure. Every photograph is proof that somebody has utilized God's power in the sunlight to print a picture. Every man must accept God's power in some form or do without its help in any form.

Dominion is the destiny to which all men are called by the use of God's power. The shining skirts of the Almighty brush the fingertips of every toiler. Currents of divine energy roll in swift tides across the world. The earth is everywhere atremble with the footsteps of Deity. Men may walk with him to weal or they may walk from him to woe. In electric currents his power runs under the seas and over the hills. Men harness these steeds of his strength and ride to success.

The highest material success depends upon a right attitude toward the power of God in material forms. God allies himself with everything we touch in order that he may touch us. He is never far away. Listening, we may hear him. Looking, we may see him. Feeling after him, we may find him. All creation is athrob with the pulsations of his life and love. His messages come from meadow and mountain, from fen and field and forest. Human nature's soul communes with nature's Over-Soul.

Hear this song by Richard Realf:

O Earth, thou hast not any wind which blows
That is not music. Every weed of thine
Pressed rightly, flows in aromatic wine;
And every humble hedgerow flower that grows,
And every little brown bird that doth sing,
Hath something greater than itself, and bears
A loving word to every living thing—
Albeit it holds the message unawares.
All shapes and sounds have something which is not
Of them. A Spirit broods amid the grass;

Vague outlines of the everlasting thought
Live in the melting shadows as they pass;
The touch of an Eternal Presence thrills
The breezes of the sunset and the hills,
Sometimes—we know not how, nor why, nor whence—
The twitter of the swallows 'neath the eaves,
The shimmer of the light amid the leaves,
Will strike up through the thick roof of our sense,
And show us things which seers and sages saw.
In the gray earth's green dawn something doth stir,
Like organ hymns within us, and doth awe.

Jesus taught clearly that every man is responsible for the use he makes of power. The responsibility of power is the theme of the parable of the talents. The man of power can never gloat over it. He cannot sit at ease and felicitate himself over the possession of power. He cannot retain it unless he bestow it. Power brings deepest joy to its possessor when it gleams in the harvest fields. It is most ecstatic when, with knotted thews, it throws itself under the burden of an overloaded brother.

Men forget that they are stewards. Every gift is a loan. Every talent is a trust. Talents must transmit themselves in the ministries of toil. In that is their life. The hoarded talent is like the hoarded manna—it will spoil. The non-use of talent is the abuse of talent. The telegraph operator counts for naught if he does not transmit the message. Truth is given to be given away. There is no other way to keep it. Seeds do not grow till they are planted. Money does not increase till it is invested. Talent must work or wither. Invest or divest—that is the alternative that fronts the face of power. Who sows most reaps most. Who gives most has most. The way to grow puissant is to serve.

“O, whatso’er may spoil or speed,
Help me to need no aid from men,
That I may help such men as need.”

But a man may make a burying ground of his business. He may cover up conscience and character with capital. He may bury his gifts in the rubbish of commerce. His talent may be trampled in the earth by the hoofs and wheels of traffic. He may sink it in a shaft. He may hide it in a mine. He may bury it in his farm. He may let it lie in the rain of pleasure and in the storms of passion till it rusts and rots away.

It will be worth a lifetime of toil to hear at the last the "Well done" of the great Overseer. He knows. It is never ill when he says "Well done." Even the disciples said that the nard was wasted, but Jesus said of her whose lavish love had poured it out, "She hath wrought a good work."

The worst of men never appreciate the best of service. Men killed Paul, but God crowned him. Men crucified Peter head down, but he walked erect into heaven. The world applauded Herod, but it was a ghastly jest. Jests do not eject sin from the soul. The world called Alexander great. But above his sleeping dust history writes his epitaph as "The youth who all things but himself subdued." Nothing that mars manhood can have Christ's "Well done." Whatever is done for God is well.

GIANTS AND GRASSHOPPERS

And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.—*Num. 13. 33.*

Be strong!

It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long;
Faint not, fight on! To-morrow comes the song.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

GIANTS may be grasshoppers and grasshoppers may be giants.

A hornet can sting an elephant to frenzy. It was a stone from the sling of a shepherd boy that felled the giant of Gath. A single moth can mar the royal wardrobe of an empire. It was a little mother-bird fluttering over her nest that turned an army from its course.

Size is not strength. Mind is mightier than matter. It is spirit that sways the scepter of empire.

Pessimism will make any people puny. Fear is at the heart of it. And fear is always enfeebling.

Pessimism blinds the heart to the highest possibilities. It unsteadies the hand of endeavor. As with a vulture's beak it plucks peace from the heart.

Pessimists are always grumblers. And grumblers are always pessimists. No real poet was

ever a pessimist. No real reformer was ever a pessimist. No great leader was ever a pessimist. And a pessimistic Christian is as impossible as a sunless summer.

The high heart of hope always sings with Anna Shipton:

He was better to me than all my hopes,
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works
And a rainbow of my tears;
The billows that guarded my sea-girt path,
Carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on his love for the rest.

Our feet will never fare toward Canaan while we face toward Egypt. That is a truth of the widest practical application. No man ever gets the best things by going backward. We leave no heavens behind us. They are all before us. The Delectable Mountains rise not from the dewy plains of youth-time. They loom aloft in the love-ripe days of a holy old age. The breath of eternal spring breathes balm over the spirits of hoary saints.

The lap of the future will empty rich harvests into the arms of God's reapers who steadily go forward. Let us have Canaan now and in the future. Let us leave Egypt, with her flesh pots and golden calves, her pessimism and her paganism, forever behind.

THE PERSISTENCE OF PERSONALITY

No man liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself.
—*Apostle Paul.*

A man need not concern himself to inquire whether he has an influence. All he has to do is to live, and the influence of his life will follow him as surely as his shadow.—*Francis Greenwood Peabody.*

No personal life is isolable. Personality is connectional. It cannot avoid relationships. Morality is impossible to impersonality. But personality is responsible.

Every life is a magnet. It attracts. It holds. It may be with the clutch of death. It may be with the grasp of life. Soul-grip must be reckoned with. Lines of influence run out from personality like rays from the sun. They may despoil the beauty on which they fall. These lines of power may slay the soul they touch. They may bring life to the pallid cheeks of death. Individuality cannot *be* and not be influential.

Personality propagates power. The points of power everywhere are the places where personality touches. The place of personality is internal. The persistence of personality is eternal. Life is a deep sea, and the undulations move onward forever.

The character of my associate creeps into mine at every crevice. Personality will impress itself. And it is impressionable. Every soul is a sensitized plate that receives impressions. Time develops the plate. Time prints the picture. Memory is the after-image that hangs in the soul forever.

No man can ever say all that he is. He is always more for good or bad than he can tell. Character is all that counts. Everything the life writes is dipped deep in the inkwells of character. One's influence will be like one's character. Deeds are characteristic of the doer. The lark will have its musical whistle. The crow will have his "caw." The mourning dove will have her funeral note. The asp will keep its venom. The adder will keep his sting. No flower will give off fragrance that it does not have. No personality will impart a spirit it does not possess. The odor will get its quality from the flower. The fruit will get its flavor from the tree. Influence will get its quality from the character.

The soil of the soul is fertile. It will not be unproductive. Something will spring out of the living loam. It will be brambles or roses. It will be cockle or wheat. A plant may be puny in the soil of one soul, and flourish when transplanted to another. A trait of character

PERSISTENCE OF PERSONALITY 165

that has feeble growth in the sire may come to full flower in the son. Goodness grows. In that is the hope of humanity. The trend of all that is true in men is ever Godward. Some day others

“To the disappointed earth shall give
The lives we meant to live,
Beautiful, free, and strong;
The light we almost had
Shall make them glad;
The words we waited long
Shall run in music from their voice and song.”

We may not reach the goal ourselves, but we can contribute something to the influence that will bring others there by and by. Christendom still feels the mighty pull of Luther's personality. The most powerful personalities that have lived are factors yet in the world's civilization. Examples are thick on the pages of history.

The persistence of personality is proof of immortality. Personal power does not cease when the familiar forms of its manifestations have disappeared. It is a serious thought that personality persists. The current may dip under the sands of the river-bed, but the subterranean waters will break out again somewhere in plunging cataracts. The good that men thought was dead will flow in swollen streams of blessing. Also the evil that has

long lurked amid the sleeping shadows of life's deep sea may come again into sight like the water snake emerging from the waves. At first sight it may be small. But the proportions will grow huge in truth's perspective. A tiny insect may ruin the reeds of the largest organ. No cause can be small whose effect is great. The beginnings of evil are like the

". . . little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all."

The psychic power of manhood is the mightiest force in the world. No seismograph can measure the strength of its upheaval. The potentiality of manhood outranks in strength the tide-swing of the sea.

The power of personality is best seen in the highest type of manhood. Look at the Man of Galilee. He said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." Jesus is the master personality. Somehow, even the men who hated him were drawn to him. He was sought by the self-important Sadducee and Pharisee. The halt, the maimed, the blind were in eager quest for him. All conditions of human sorrow flowed to him as rivers to the sea. He was a man of sorrows because the sorrows of all men were his. His grief was a soundless sea into which flowed all the rivers of human woe. He is the

PERSISTENCE OF PERSONALITY 167

great loadstone of love. No other life can draw like his.

The greatest statesmen are drawn to him. Lincoln chose a sentence from the speech of Jesus as the keynote of his own statecraft. Gladstone was a loving disciple of his great Master.

He attracts the scientists. The world has never had a teacher so thoroughly scientific. He often answered the greatest question by asking another. Along the path of the known he led men to the knowledge of what had hitherto been the unknown. He taught the mysterious movements of the Spirit by the mysterious movements of the winds. He always set the feet of Truth squarely on the facts. No wonder that, with few exceptions, the leading scientists of the world have loved him.

The greatest musicians have been drawn to him as bees to flowers for nectar. The sublime music that has broken from his lips has filled the world. The truth he taught is set to heaven's high rhythm.

In the lineaments of his face the artist finds the subtle beauty he delights to paint. The world never tires looking at the masters' pictures of the Master.

For the finest strokes of literary genius his

thoughts have supplied the material. He has ever been the soul of the poet's sweetest song. His own literary touch is always stamped with a divine beauty. He weaves love's colored dream with all the sweetest hues of earth and heaven.

It is fitting that Hooykaas should break forth with this encomium:

"Thy name shall be borne on the breath of the winds through all the world; and with that name no thought except of goodness, nobleness, and love shall link itself in the bosoms of thy brothers, who have learned to know thee, and who thou art. Thy name shall be the symbol of salvation to the weak and wandering, of restoration to the fallen and the guilty, of hope to all who sink in comfortless despair. Thy name shall be the mighty cry in progress, in freedom, in truth, in purity—the living symbol of the dignity of man, the epitome of all that is noble, lofty, and holy upon earth. To thy name shall be inseparably joined that ideal which thou didst bring into the world, and which can never be rejected from it more. Thy life was short, yet in it thou didst more than any one of all thy brethren to uplift the souls and lives of men."

THE PREROGATIVE OF FAITH

Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.—*Captain Joshua.*

Faith is the supreme courage. It is an easy and a cowardly thing to deny; it needs a supreme courage to believe.—*W. J. Dawson.*

It is always the prerogative of faith to claim success before it is seen.

Faith itself is an evidence of unseen things. We talk wisely about the "philosophy of faith." We speak of it as a "doctrine" or a "system." I am not sure that we think about faith as the very essence of the soul's most satisfactory evidence. *E videre.* That old Latin term means "by which" or "with which to see." Now, faith is not eyesight, but it is soul sight. Doubt hoodwinks the heart, but faith is the soul's clear vision of truth. The faithless heart is always dissatisfied. Doubt is simply the heart's rejection of evidence. Doubt can never bring repose any more than darkness can produce light or death can regenerate life. The heart must have evidence. And faith is the forecast of ultimate certainty. It is the soul's foresight of what is yet invisible to the

bodily eyes. The sight of the invisible was the secret of Moses's endurance. It is the secret of all strong souls.

He was no fanatic who said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city." The bestowment of a gift must always precede its actual possession.

Some day science itself will see that faith is a scientific principle. It will be discerned that it is not the theory of a theologian. It will be discovered that faith is the only satisfactory working hypothesis for intellectual as well as spiritual progress. When science plants both feet on this great truth, her light will shine full circle.

Faith is a soul-fact as really as a flower is a soil-fact. Faith is as necessary to the success of the soul as rivers and railroads are to commerce. Faith is ever the force that fells the Jerichos of life.

A faithless man is a feeble man. All great leaders have been men of great faith—not so much faith in the mere verbal setting of a creed, but faith in principles, faith in Providence. They have seen in history the goings of God among the nations.

We all have our Jerichos to-day, no less than did the Hebrews of old. The mechanic and the miner, the carpenter and the farmer, the parent

THE PREROGATIVE OF FAITH 171

and the teacher, the scientist and the statesman—Jericho walls of difficulty front us each and all. But if we follow God's directions, and move on faithfully in his service, all of these walls will "fall down flat."

THE KING AND THE BEGGARS

He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.—*John, Prophet of Patmos Isle.*

There was a certain rich man.—*Luke 16. 19.*

There was a certain beggar.—*Luke 16. 20.*

The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.—*Prophet Isaiah.*

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever.—*Henry W. Baker.*

SOUL-POVERTY is pauperism. Many a hut holds a prince. Many a palace houses a pauper. A certain rich man was gorgeously arrayed, but his soul was nude, himself was unclothed. Only stuff woven of spiritual fiber can clothe spirits. The grave will consume the purple and fine linen. Royalty of soul passes through the fires of death unscathed. The robe of flesh will supply the charnal banquet of worms.

The hand of doom struck the knell of Dives. The fellowships of earth were snapped asunder like river-reeds. The joys of sense vanished. The ponderous mists of eternity rolled in upon him. Hope is dead. He stumbles over her tomb into abysmal deeps of woe. The worm

THE KING AND THE BEGGARS 173

that dies not feeds on the fiber of his soul. The scorpion stings again, and yet again. He is alone, save that vultures of despair attend him. *Alone*. That word is brimming with anguish. Hot grief is at its heart. How lonely is death!

All that poets sing, and grief hath known,
Of hopes laid waste, knells in that word, *Alone*.

Dives died thus, not because he was rich, but because he was wrong. He sowed to the wind. Now he must reap the whirlwind.

"The tissues of the life to be,
We weave with colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown."

But behold that royal-souled beggar that lay at the rich man's gate. From poverty to paradise—that is his biography. Dogs licked his sores. But his soul was good enough for angels to kiss. The proud world wagged its head at the sufferer, and passed him by. That is the oft-repeated story, ancient and sad. Kings and queens would fain stand now with uncovered head at Homer's grave. But the world let that princely singer beg. The world let Luther go hungry, but his gifts to Christendom have made men rich. John Howard Payne, whose lyric of love still sings at ten thousand firesides, was left by the thankless world to die a

homeless wanderer. And there was Thomas Chatterton. The guilty world must answer for his fate. He was a miracle of genius. But before his rare gifts came to full flower the cruel world left him half starved in his London attic. The sacred lips of manhood's dawn had scarcely touched his brow. But his spirit, fresh-winged, was strong enough to sweep the empyrean. His palms were full of jewels. His heart was as full of song as is the lark's on Mayday morn. He gave us "Goodwin," "The Mynstrel's Song," "The Resignation," and other rare notes that enriched the melody of English verse. The world preferred his sob to his song, and now she hears neither, and sighs. Chatterton, bright bird of the dawn, has flown.

In other days Another came. He was worthy to be cradled in the skies. His garments were made of the morning light. Will not the earth receive him with eager joy? Nay. The world shut the door in his face. There was no room for him. He slept in the ox's manger. But if he had left us then, the world had never found the long way back to God. The world had room for fame, the world had room for power, the world had room for wealth, the world had room for pleasure—it had no room for him. True, for all worlds could not contain a life so vast as his. The falling of his feet was music

THE KING AND THE BEGGARS 175

fit for angels. But he could not be housed in an earthly inn. Kings had welcome, but not the King of kings. An artist would be accorded the best place in the palace, but he who threw upon the canvas of his snow-white life the sublimest picture of love and mercy was spurned from the doorsteps of earthly homes. Well does he know the pain of being rejected. Even his own did not receive him. He knows the anguish of homelessness. No downy pillow soothed his aching temples. Will not such as he speak love's softest word to sorrow? Such is his record engraven on the centuries. To lives that have been plundered of moral health and purity he will extend the hand of healing and of help. To every sufferer he will be high-souled Brother.

Study this King's bearing toward his beggar-brothers. The vast emprise of redemption engaged his high thought. Into that lofty meditation the angels themselves desired to look.

Yon beggar by the wayside attracts his notice. Were that lonely figure there some shining angel, the King might pass him by. But this great and good Galilean halts at the sufferer's side to engage in humble ministry. The throngs were hurrying to the festival. Nothing so common as a blind beggar could delay them. But this King, because he is

kingly, tarries with the beggar. Love delights to linger in sweet service in the haunts of sorrow. This King were not the Son of man did he pass by the suffering sons of men. He waits to heal. He always had too much to do to hurry. Infinitely keener is his eye for soul-values than is the eagle's for the sky. He knows that traces of celestial royalty linger yet in many a buffeted and broken life that the world has long ago forgotten. He is the great psychic explorer. The least fragment of worth lost amid the soul's royal ruins cannot escape him. His deft fingers will touch life's lost chords to melody again. He will heal the bruised reed. His breath of love will fan the smoking flax to flame.

Poor beggar, thou art calling him. He stands still. He waits thy coming. Never did this Healer go away from the approaching feet of misery. The folds of his royal mantle will fall over the shame of thy nakedness. Cheer thee, sufferer. Thy welcome will be sure. He sees thy sorrow. That is thy plea. Hear his sweet word: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." That is his guarantee. It is irrefragible. In thy self-despair have hope in him. The healing current of his life he will turn upon thy soul. Thou shalt follow him in the way, seeing and living.

THE KING AND THE BEGGARS 177

But one is slow to give up the last vestige of one's possessions. The cloak still clung to the beggar's shoulders. That much the law allowed even a beggar. It was his nightly shelter. It meant much to gaunt want. It was precious to poverty. But wise Bartimæus relinquished all lesser values in order to win the supreme prize. His sight would be worth more than his cloak. Inward peace would be worth more than outward possessions.

Friend, it is thus with thee. It is the inner wealth that satisfies. The soul cannot feed on gold. No house-roof can shelter the storm-tossed sinner's soul. Dismantle thee of all thy wretched cloaks. Prodigal, return to thy Father. He will put the best robe upon thee.

See those leprous beggars. The King is passing. The wretches call to him. Suffering is always alert for sympathy. Sorrow sharpens the soul's sensibilities. Is there not a kind of wireless, spiritual telegraphy? The soul can see without the retina. The soul can hear without the auditory nerve. It is God's way of mercy. He will not isolate himself from human pain. He listens more for sobs than for songs. He would heal all men's woes.

"There is no place where earthly sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earthly failings
Have such kindly judgment given."

But suffering is oftentimes the surgical operation that saves the sufferer. It was his sore need that drove the leper to the source of supply. He knew his case was helpless and hopeless. But at sight of the King hope rallies even in rags and wretchedness. To be healed had only been the troubled dream of the leper's despair. But this kindly King speaks. A feeble response comes from the leper's soul. Hope stands once more at the door. Despair departs. The sweet voice of God steals in among the royal ruins. Celestial radiance robs sorrow's night of its gloom. The leper is healed. All things are possible to him that believeth. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. That he should take such pains with material so hopeless and revolting is enough to bring the laughter of hope to the lips of death. And it does, for he mastereth death. The King thinks more of us than we do of ourselves.

“How thou canst think so much of me,
Being the God thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
And sunshine to my heart.”

SHELTER

For thou hast been a shelter for me.—*Poet David.*

Many voices have offered me a home for my quiet hours;
Thou alone hast promised me a covert in my storm.—*George Matheson.*

God provides adequate shelter in this world of storms. He does not leave the soul nude and unsheltered. "The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Defeat is never disastrous till the soul breaks down. No poisoned shaft can pierce the "breastplate of righteousness." No dart of death can break through the "shield of faith." Purity is impervious. God is the only shield. And without him the soul is forever unsheltered.

"Mighty rock, whose towering form
Looks above the frowning storm,
Rock by countless millions tried,
In Thy shadow let me hide."

God shelters us in storms of sorrow. He makes all things work together for good to them that love him. That knowledge to him that has it is sure shelter. There are many sources of sorrow, but to know that God's goodness will turn every current of grief into a river of mercy—that is infinite solace. And

of that fact the soul may be sure. It will always be true that the heart can know what the tongue cannot tell. Untellable truth may still be knowable. Speech has never uttered the profoundest secrets of soul-peace. The soul may know God as a shelter when storms of sorrow fall. God shelters us from storms of sin. None other can.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin.

What else can hide from his pure eyes, whose look sees smut upon the stars. The "filthy rags" of self-righteousness are too short to cover the soul.

It was only the innocent man who found a place in the "cities of refuge." The guilty man could not be shielded there. Righteousness has always been rewarded, though the coronation has often been delayed. Righteousness is the only enduring renown. Human hands have never woven a fadeless crown. Men may crown the king. But only God can crown the character. He lays the laurel of life on the lily brow of faithful love. Crowns of goodness will last with living luster when the sheen of earthly gold shall tarnish and grow dim with death.

These "cities of refuge" were for the shielding of innocence and not guilt. Thus God would erect safeguards against guilt. But "in

the fullness of time" Christ came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. His age-long purpose of redemption finds its fullest sweep amid the havoc of the heart that sin has made. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

A SOUL AMONG SWINE

And he began to be in want.—*Luke 15. 14.*

The torn manuscripts of the human soul.—*Ruskin.*

THE soul was made for hyperian altitudes. It is natal to the skies. This bird of paradise can never feel at home with vultures. A nest of biting serpents and stinging adders is no place for an angel.

Narcissus walked among the rude swains of Attica, thinking himself but one of them. He saw in the water one day a beautiful face. It was fairer than Apollo's or Aphrodite's. He was amazed to find that the face was his own. In that he saw that he was akin to the gods. Knowing this, he was henceforth another man. With lofty mien he trod the fields as if he were a god. He scorned everything unseemly. Thus glassed in God's truth the soul may see her kinship to the King.

Sin is the one despoiler of the soul. Its genesis is in the soul. Were there no souls, there were no sin. The problem of sin in all its bearings is past any man's solution. But sin is here. Sin began in the universe when the first personal choice walked with rebel feet across the will of God. The first rebel was the first free will that made that choice. The re-

sponsibility for sin inheres in him who commits it. The "original sin" was committed by the original sinner. I am not responsible for that, nor for him.

Sin is lawlessness. Sin is not natural. Nature is law-abiding. God is the author of nature, but he is never the author of lawlessness. Nature runs along the track of his will. Sin is always a contravention of his will. Law is obedient to the Lawmaker. But sin smites the Lawmaker in ruinous rebellion. Essential nature and essential sin are as far apart as God and Satan. God is the author of the one. Satan is the author of the other.

Some good people talk of "inbred sin." There is no other kind; in fact, there are no *kinds* of sin. The kind is one. If sin breed at all, it must be in the soul. Sin breeds in the sinner, not elsewhere. Sin is not an entity separate and apart from personality. Sin does not lie dormant in the soul like a sleeping tiger. It is not a creature, but the act of a creature. The sinner must *be some one* in order to sin. He must *do something* to be a sinner. The deed may be physical. It may be mental. It may be spiritual. It may be all three at once. *Sin is not a seed springing forth against nature, it is a soul springing forth against God.*

The sorrow of sin is deep and dreadful.

Anguish is always at its core. Night comes when the sun sets. When life leaves, death enters the crumbling temple. Sorrow and sin are inseparable companions. Death cannot part them. The final touch of his chill hand forever binds together these grewsome partners of woe.

Sin brings the sorrow of torturing memory. The dark record is indelible. "The flood of years" flowing over it forever cannot wash it away. It is ineffaceable. Even salvation does not take away the memory of sin. "The remembrance of them is grievous unto us."

Sin cuts off the sources of happiness. It breaks faith with God. It destroys communion with him. Apart from him there are no rapturous delights. The inflow of God to the soul and the outflow of the soul to God—that makes the trade winds of bliss.

Sin brings sorrow by breaking the soul's dynamic connection with the source of all power. When the trolley-arm slips the live wire the result to the car is inertia. All progress is paralyzed. So with the soul when its hold on God is broken.

There is a deep sob in this song of Lowell:

Men think it is an awful sight
To see a soul just set adrift
On that dread voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift;

But 'tis more awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away
Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
I hear the reapers singing go
Into God's harvest; I, that might
With them have chosen, here below
Grove shuddering at the gates of night.

The sorrows of sin are shown in the experiences of the prodigal son. It is a long way from the Father's house to the swine-lots of sin. The time it takes to traverse the distance may be brief. The dark tragedy of sin hastens to its fatal close—nay, it has no end, save in God's forgiving mercy. The yawning chasms of sin are far below the sunny heights of holy manhood. One mad plunge of passion may seal one's doom. The spaces are vast between virtue and vice. Falling is an effortless process. But to regain the summit—ah, that means blistered feet, blood-marks, clenched teeth, knitted thews, resolution, courage, manhood, God. Miles do not count for much with God, but men do. God measures distances by character.

In the prodigal's experience there was the sorrow arising from an overwhelming sense of

waste. His riotous living turned out to be nothing but dying. He had squandered soul-substance. No angel has computed that value. The shining threads of that fabric were spun from the fiber of heaven. The angel of life wove them in the looms of God.

Poor prodigal, wallowing with swine, when God meant thee to walk with angels. Stay thy hand, thou self-destroyer; above thy ruin stands thy Saviour. Hear this word, sweet beyond the naming: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

In the prodigal there was also the gnawing sorrow of want. Sin promises robes at first, but gives rags at last. Sin offers a gilded palace, but drags the sinner at last into a yawning sepulcher. Sin proffers bread, but it is the poison of asps. The fruit sin gives is the apples of Sodom. The fountains of sin sparkle, but they are charged with venom. Sin has gardens, but they grow rank with the nightshade. The music of sin is the sough of deadly winds. The only shelter sin affords is the charnel house. Sin promises repose on beds as soft as eider-down, but on these beds men sleep the sleep of death. No cup is too sweet for sin to embitter. No chalice is too pure for sin to befoul.

No blooms are too fair for sin to blight. Sin would smite the thorn-crown hard down on the brow of Love. Sin would stab the very heart of God with stillettoes of hellish hate.

Wretched wanderer, soul-spent with sinning, thou hast been deceived. How vast must be thy want! Thou hast been cheated of peace. As the bee rifles the flower of honey, thy soul has been raided and rifled of purity. Thy proud power has departed. Prone thou liest, trodden under the torturing heel of fear. Thine eye, once like the eagle's, is now lusterless. The pinions of thy soul have lost their majestic poise. They droop now bedrabbled at thy side with the poison damps of death.

Poor pauper! Thy want has widened to a yawning gulf of despair. The wide spheres of thy love are emptied of God. Alas, for thee!

But cheer thee, cheer thee. Some pilgrim hastens hither upon the highway. Thy Father hies him over the hills to meet thee. His love will kiss thee back to pardon and to peace. On thy bony finger he will place the ring of honor. Whose honor? My soul, whose honor? The honor of his compassion. He will cover thy rags and shame with the robe of his own royalty. Not thy footsteps, but thy soul-steps brought thee to him. Hear the angels sing—that music is thy welcome home.

GOD'S SIFTINGS

Like the chaff which the wind driveth away.—*Poet David.*

Will gather the wheat into his garner.—*Luke 6. 17.*

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.

—*George Wither.*

THE strength of God's army is not in quantity, but in quality. Might is not in the multitude, but in the man. Principle, and not powder, is the power in God's armies. One heroic, God-filled heart is mightier than a godless host. The secret of mastery is not in the mass, but in the man.

Quality always counts more than quantity. Sheet lightning is harmless, though it flashes over wide spaces. The concentrated electric current in a little unscreened wire touches the workman's hand and he dies. The winds that waft their wings over the wide prairies mean death and destruction when their energies crowd into the cyclone's fatal funnel.

Thirty-two thousand people were too many. Ten thousand was better. But that was still too many. Given God and Gideon and the three hundred swerveless soldiers, then the Midianites were mastered.

The winnowing winds of God are ever sifting out the chaff and saving the wheat. No golden grain has ever slipped through the meshes of God's providential screen. The best is always in God's keeping. The worst is sure to waste away. It is not in God's plan to preserve it.

No lasting harm can come to him who follows the good. He cannot die who lives for the deathless right. No wind of the world can blow away the worthy wheat. It is only the chaff that the wind drives away. Everything good comes back to God. Only debris will drift away.

THE PRINCE

The Prince of Peace.—*Prophet Isaiah.*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.

—*Charles Wesley.*

WHO is he? The world has had many princes. The name is not new. But the Prince of whom I speak is peerless. The wide world is too little to domicile him. His feet are ashimmer with fire. At his tread thrones tremble. Nations nestle in his palms. The ages hang their laurels on his brow.

Who is he? The answer is too big for verbal reply. The treasures and greatest gifts of civilization must make response. The world's dictionaries cannot define him. The creeds of Christendom will not contain him. He is no dogmatist. He is no sectarian. He is no unreasoning partisan. No bigoted priest is he. He is a Friend, Brother, Father. His compassion compasses the world's distress.

See him as a man, he looked like a man, he talked like a man, he felt like a man, he wept like a man. He was a Man of sorrows. His heart was the sacred receptacle of all men's

anguish. It is no wonder that Napoleon stammered the hesitant words, "If it be lawful to call him a man." Of only one in all history it is said, "He did no sin," and this Prince is that Man.

See him as a Friend. He never posed. He struck no attitudes. Under secret pressure he never failed. He stood closest when the heart's stress was greatest. His ear was attuned to the cry of sorrow. He gave most where promise was least for remuneration. He was a friend of the rich and the poor. He did not class men thus. He recognized men as right or wrong. With him the moral standard was supreme.

Angels might call him to solace and slumber, but the sorrowing heart was the magnet that drew him. The sadder the cry the gladder was his response. There is a wretched woman. Her heart is bleeding at every pore. Guilty inquisitors have condemned her. In pronouncing her sentence of death they announce their own death penalty. Hear this sweet word from the Prince's lips: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Thus it was that he bore himself toward the sinner that washed his sacred feet with her tears.

" To the hall of the feast came the sinful and fair;
She heard in the city that Jesus was there;
Unheeding the splendor that blazed on the board,
She silently knelt at the feet of the Lord.

“The frown and the murmur went round through them all,
That one so unhallowed should tread in that hall;
And some said the poor would be objects more meet
As the wealth of her perfume she showered on his feet.

“She heard but the Saviour, she spoke but with sighs;
She dare not look up to the heaven of his eyes;
And the hot tears gushed forth at each heave of her breast
As her lips to his sandals were throbbingly pressed.

“In the sky, after tempest, as shineth the bow,
In the glance of the sunbeam, as melteth the snow,
He looked on that lost one—her sins were forgiven,
And the sinner went forth in the beauty of heaven.”

Consider this Prince as a teacher. “No man ever spake like this man.” He threw new light on the old truths. He condemned no truth that he found in the philosophy of the day. But he brought it into clearer perspective. It had never had the setting which he gave it. He set truth in the concrete, like the diamond in a ring, till it gleamed with new luster.

The common people heard him gladly. That was a great achievement in the progress of truth. He taught the teachers of the day what they never before had known. He never taught a truth that was not central and essential to some great system. To his clear eye the material mirrored the invisible and spiritual. He chose the symbols of flowers and birds and grass for the showing of great lessons. He let

fly his swift arrows to the very centers of character. Nor did he once miss the mark.

Love was at the heart of all that Jesus taught. Supremacy is love's prerogative. Love is at ease when it dominates all else. We repudiate "the divine right of kings," but the divine right of love has universal suffrage.

Every great system must have a center. Principals are few and subordinates are many. It is true in the realm of matter, and it is true in the realm of mind. The solar system has the sun for its center. That principle is eternal. It cannot be eliminated from the mesh of things. From a bee-hive to a universe the few have ever ruled. But the many have been represented in the few. The sooner this twofold truth is lodged in the minds of men, the sooner will social and economic harmony universally prevail.

But love is the living center that must vitalize the entire mass. That is the sociological secret of Jesus. And that is adequate to the demands of all worlds and all ages. That truth is primal, central, ultimate, now and forever. It is the heart of the Golden Rule, and the Golden Rule is the heart of God.

This Prince is God. That is seen in the transcendency of his thought. He flings his thought-projectiles far beyond men's mental

horizons. Poetry praises the music and beauty of his speech. Philosophy is amazed at the sweep of his syllogisms. Science is startled at the accuracy of his deductions. The consensus of humanity crowns him Teacher of all teachers.

The loftiness of Jesus's love proves him more than human. In his own fine phrase he points out the border line of mere human love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But he drank the draft of death that he might press the chalice of life to the lips of his foes. That breaks over the boundary lines of the human; that proves him divine.

The Prince's power makes him God. He mastered every foe that ever mastered men. He gave the deathblow to sin. He smote the shackles from the slave's soul. He discrowned man's destroyer and laid him low. He has turned the sluices of salvation into the souls of sinners and made them singing saints. That record is spread over the pages of history for the critic's keenest scrutiny; let men read and rejoice. He has wrenched the precious prey from the teeth of death. He has sung the lyrics of life into the grave's gloom.

Hail, great Galilean!—Great God.

LOVE

God is love.—1 *John* 4. 8.

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee.—*Ruth* 2. 16.

Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords
with might—

Smote the chord of self that, trembling, passed in music out
of sight.—*Alfred Tennyson*.

LOVE's highest service is to stanch the sore
soul-wounds of life.

Lust and pitiless passion are love's perversion. It is like love to forget its own in remembering another's good. It clings to the soul like vines to a tree, and naught but death can break its tendrils. It was much more than mere euphony of speech when poor Poe said:

And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

Love is a matter of soul with soul. Whatever the sex of the lovers may be, it is always strongest 'twixt two. Jonathan and David were as inseparable as were Ruth and Naomi. Naomi was willing to give Ruth up because she loved Ruth. Ruth was unwilling to give

Naomi up because she loved Naomi. Both things are possible, and so are true.

Naomi knew well the prejudices of both peoples. She understood what was involved in Ruth's return with her. The good woman would rather be lonely than to compromise Ruth for the sake of her own soul's solace. Each would serve the other till death should sever them. Therein is shown the redemptive spirit that would serve and save mankind. And that is the meaning of unforgetting and ever-clinging love. Lowell sings:

Such is true love, which steals into the heart
With feet as silent as the lightsome dawn
That kisses smooth the rough brows of the dark,
And hath its will through blissful gentleness,
Not like a rocket, which, with passionate glare,
Whirs suddenly up, then bursts, and leaves the night
Painfully quivering on the dazed eyes;
A love that gives and takes, that seeth faults,
Not with flaw-seeking eyes like needle-points,
But loving-kindly ever looks them down
With the o'ercoming faith that still forgives.

Amid life's bitter bankruptcies God braces us up with strong soul-stays.

Naomi had gone to Moab with the wealth of a stalwart husband's love, and having the affection of two fond sons. She went out with the hope and the promise of spring. With eyes veiled in mists of grief, she returned to the homeland amid the faded and falling leaves of

autumn. She went away with the sacred chalice of her woman's heart abrim with wifely and motherly bliss. She came back a mourner wrapped about with weeds of woe.

Thus it ofttimes is in life. Some swift storm plunders the heart of its joy and sweeps its treasures away. It was deep grief that wrung the blood from Rachel's heart. The soul of him who wrestled with the celestial visitant at Jabbok was harrowed like the plowed bosom of a fallow field by the treachery of those whom he loved. David's lament over the broken body of his wayward boy sobs yet in his psalms. That peerless prince in the land of Uz moans out his misery on the mocking winds, sitting alone on the ash-heap of his burned-out hopes. Paul, with bleeding back, drinks the deepest dregs of anguish.

And what shall I say of the Man of Sorrows? What painter has pictured his passion? What poet has sobbed out in dirge or song the sorrows that swept his heart?

But in the darkest hour all of these had glimpse of day. That is the mystery of mercy. That is the wonder of love. Like sunlight sifting through the blinding clouds of storm, so does God's love shine through the blackest clouds of grief. When every other support gives way he stays us with his love. His love

is the ribbon of light that circles the storm.
Love is the redemptive force among men.

“Some souls lose all things but the love of beauty,
And by that love they are redeemable,
For in love and beauty they acknowledge good,
And good is God—the great necessity.”

SOWING AND REAPING

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—
Apostle Paul.

The tissues of the life to be,
We weave with colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.—*Whittier.*

SEED-SOWING is the most serious business of life. We are all sowers. This much the Lord of the harvest has decided for us, but he leaves with us the solemn task of choosing the seed. The enemy tempts us to sow the cockle. It will grow with less labor and attention than the wheat. He impresses that fact upon us to make us false. With our hands so full of toil and our backs so bent with burdens, the idea of ease is not without attraction. So much soil is ready to the sower's hand that he is tempted not to till. Weeds will grow almost anywhere. The loam of human life needs no tilling for the tares. But in that lies the cogent plea for the plowshare. Plunge the point deep in the soil. Throw open the fallow fields. Uproot the tares. Fling from full palms the precious wheat. It will smother the cheat. Weeds will wither for lack of nourishment. The wheat will wave in welcome harvests by and by.

The reaper will harvest what he put in the soil. It will not be other than what he sowed. It will be more in quantity, but the quality will be identical. Everything in nature is "after its kind"; so is everything in human nature.

The toilers in the fields of truth have lofty companions. The renowned of the ages have left their footprints in these same fields. Angel gleaners are thick among the sheaves. They walk the dusty highways of earthly toil. Their winnowing wings sweep softly the laborer's brow. If the eyes of the human workers could catch sight of these shining companions it would lighten many a load. That scene would gird the fainting pilgrim. Repose would come in the heat of the day, and there would be the waxing light of hope at eventide.

But we were not sent so much to see as to serve. Let the harvester go forth with the morning's sweet breath on his temples. Let him put the keen edge to the waiting wheat. God's garner is ready. The harvest is vast. The white fields girdle the world. The morning dews are sweet with the aroma of ripened grain. Let there be no loiterers in the fields where the gleaners go. The task is large enough to tax the machinery of Christendom.

There is no time for wrangling waste or idle disputation. It is the time of the harvest's high noon.

The sickle's work must be in season. The ripe grain is in jeopardy if the reaper wait. The harvest must be opportune. Once the grain is ripe it must not wait for long.

Many a truth has been lost on the mind that was not ready for it. Even God sent not his Son till "the fullness of time was come." When prophecy was complete he came as its fulfiller. He came at a period of fullness in human history. Greek literature and philosophy were at their zenith when the Sun of Righteousness arose. Plato had discovered sin and the sinner, but no Saviour. Lucretius in his discourse on death was chanting the threnody of despair. In this fullness of pagan night the splendor of Jesus broke upon the world.

The sower will some day be the reaper. Let him not despair. The seed may slumber for a season away from sight of men, but it will press its way out of the loam into the light. God, who takes care of the seeds of flowers, will take care of the seeds of faith. He who takes care of the seeds of trees will take care of the seeds of truth. Therein is thy hope, thou sower and reaper. Be faithful to the

limit of thy strength, and he will finish what is beyond thy reach. Be not baffled with thy failure. God will yet bring thy endeavor to high and holy success. Honest effort itself is moral victory.

THE DEATH OF DAGON

And Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground.—
Prophet Samuel.

The wages of sin is death.—*Apostle Paul.*

All thing betray thee, who betrayest me.—*Francis Thompson.*

ABOUT four thousand Israelites had been slain by the Philistines. This disaster created great consternation among the leaders of Israel. Why was it? It was an occasion for serious inquiry.

Disaster sooner or later marks the end of the enterprise that leaves out God. During the days of all the judges the ark had been at Shiloh. When Israel departed from the ark they departed from God. That is why four thousand dead men lay stark on the gory battlefield. Disaster, dissolution, death—that is the law of sequence in the career of wickedness.

The forces of evil will master any people when that people breaks faith with God. That is the meaning of this great slaughter. It is no wonder that some Israelitish leader should say, "Let us fetch the ark." Progress and prosperity are impossible without God. But that is the story that must be retold to every generation.

The Ten Commandments were in the ark. That chest carried the symbol of the moral law. Why did Israel wish to "fetch the ark" from Shiloh? "That it may save us." "That we may serve God"—that would have been a nobler purpose. What shall I do to serve and save?—that is the Christian's question. "What must I do to be saved?"—that is the interrogatory of the startled sinner.

"Let us fetch the ark, that it may save us." Does that suggest anything modern? Why not put the following considerations in the same category? Let us join the church, that it may give us social respectability. Let us join the church, that it may profit us commercially. Let us join the church, that it may give us political prestige. Are not all these motives one with that old selfish spirit of the Israelites? If a man seek the ministry and the benefits of the church with such sinister motives as these, does he not seek to secure spiritual standing without paying the price? That is what men call theft in commercial and monetary matters.

The Philistines captured the ark. But what could a thimble do if it captured the ocean? The thimble has no capacity to contain the ocean. How can sin be in harmony with righteousness? How can light and darkness

dwell together? There is no affinity between good and evil.

These Philistines took the ark of God to Ashdod, and set the sacred thing beside their idol, Dagon. The next morning the people of Ashdod found their man-fish fallen on his face before the ark. They fixed him up again, and he fell the second time. This time his head and his hands were broken off. In that is prophecy of pagan dissolution. All other kingdoms shall be broken in pieces by the kingdom of Christ.

ROOM

Thou hast set my feet in a large place.—*Poet David.*

Thy gentleness hath enlarged me.—*Poet David.*

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.
—*Jesus of Galilee.*

Be like the bird that, on frail branches swinging,
A moment sits and sings;
He feels them tremble, but he keeps on singing,
Knowing that he hath wings.—*Victor Hugo.*

ANY sphere less than the infinite will hamper the soul. Confined in a cage she will pine away. Shut up in barns, or stores, or counting-houses, she must die. The soul must breathe the free air of the everlasting hills. Her unfettered wings must sweep the wide welkin. The soul must expand or shrink to zero. She is native to life's vastnesses. The soul need not be hirpling over the foothills when sun-shot peaks wait for the tread of her queenly feet.

If we were born to greatness, our quest ought to be for the greatest things. That is what the Master meant when he said, "Set not your affections on things on the earth, but on things above." Mire is no place for manhood. Living worth is the only wealth. Only righteousness is royal. In a thousand

years the ashes in an emperor's tomb will look no better than the dust in the slab-marked grave of the pauper. The gnawing tooth of time will not cut truth away. Love will live when thrones have crumbled and earthly crowns have faded. Nothing is good enough for the soul to keep that may not be kept forever. No little garden plot of pleasure will do. The fleshly tent may be pitched in a small space, but the spirit-tenter must go on many a wide excursion. It is not enough to discover the north pole. The soul must find worlds. Nothing less than the best is good enough for the good. A king must have a kingdom. The soul's strong pinions were made to soar.

Hear this music from Mrs. Browning's harp:

The wind sounds only in opposing straits,
The sea, beside the shore: man's spirit rends
Its quiet only up against the ends
Of wants and oppositions, loves and hates,
Where worked and worn by passionate debates,
And losing by the loss it apprehends
The flesh rocks round, and every breath it sends
Is raveled to a sigh. All tortured states
Suppose a straitened place. Jehovah Lord,
Make room for rest around me.

But it is sad that the soul may be little. A man may be short of soul-stature. The grasp of his mind may be small. His spiritual ca-

capacity may be cramped. His sympathies may be narrow. His psychic vision may be hedged by close horizons. Every soul has need for enlargement. The expanding influence is not far to seek. The Hebrew singer said of God, "Thy gentleness hath enlarged me."

This is the method of heaven. The exalted must lift up the lowly. The strong must aid the weak. The wise must teach the ignorant. The saved must find the lost. The highest function of greatness is to enlarge the little. Might is called to a mighty ministry. Moral might is plethoric with mercy. The greatest life is most approachable by the least. Misfortune appeals to mercy. Dignity is not distant. It draws near to serve, not to be served.

All great souls are sympathetic. Lincoln was heartbroken by the sorrows of the common people. Gladstone could weep at the grief of a little waif. The great and good McKinley said of the assassin who so wickedly smote him, "Let no one hurt him." The cheeks of Jesus were wet with weeping over Jerusalem. His sob of sorrow at Lazarus's grave has gone around the world like a lyric of love.

Greatness cannot escape great suffering. Jesus was the greatest seer. He was a Man of sorrows. The seer always is. He is never gladdened by the sight of grief. Great poets

have been great sufferers. "The still, sad music of humanity" smites with pain the alert ear of genius. But if genius suffers, what of His anguish whose greatness transcends genius infinitely beyond its farthest reach? His sensitive soul caught the black outlines of every sufferer's woe. Gladness and grief mingle in the chalice that touches the lips of the great

GENIUS AND JESUS

Truly this was the Son of God.—*Roman Centurion.*

Strong Son of God.—*Alfred Tennyson.*

Behold how he died. And the earth lost its light. And see how he came to life, and went up on high again, to carry out those truths in which is the life of nations, and in which is the health of man's soul.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

DR. CHANNING said: "He never lost the possession of himself in his sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy; but did good with the tranquillity and constancy which mark the providence of God."

John Stuart Mill committed himself to Christ, at least theoretically, in the following confession: "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species boast. When this prominent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be

said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."

Rousseau, in speaking of the gospel record, said: "The evangelical history bears no marks of fiction. The history of Socrates, which no one presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ." And in speaking of the death of Jesus, Rousseau gave utterance to that familiar and famous passage so often quoted by Christian writers. He said, "If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."

Theodore Parker said, "It is for his truth and for his life, his wisdom, goodness, piety, that he is honored in my heart—yes, in the world's heart."

Even Strauss testified: "He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought, and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart."

The great Richter exclaimed, "Jesus is the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure, who, with his pierced hand, has raised up empires from their foundations, turned the

stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages."

Finally, the brilliant Renan most beautifully says: "Whatever be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing, his legend will call forth tears without end, his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts, all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

THE FOOT-FALL OF THE KING

Behold, thy King cometh.—*John 12. 15.*

Jesus not only surveys human life from above, but he approaches it from within.—*Francis Greenwood Peabody.*

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing.—*Isaac Watts.*

THE world was waiting for that majestic step. The Capital City would welcome him. It was a city that received him then. Now the world gives him ovation.

His advent has fixed the reckoning point of all history. On the pivot of his life the centuries swing. His track is the trail of light that girdles the world.

His triumphal entry into the great city was prophetic of his entry into all cities. It was unique. Nothing like it had ever been accorded to mortal man. The triumph of Pompey in Rome two thousand years ago was a feeble affair compared with that given by Christianity to Christ at the daydawn of the twentieth century. This was a military victory which the Romans celebrated. The hands of their conqueror were red with human gore. Along the Via Sacra was heard the clanking of

the captive's chains. It took two days for the line of Pompey's trophies to pass. The trophies of Jesus stretch across the spaces of twenty centuries. No captive's gyves are in that procession. But the clink of falling fetters fills all the air with the music of freedom.

The Roman triumph was one of selfishness. It was a huge manifestation of greed for glory. Its glory was its shame. The Roman's perspective was pitifully deficient. He held that Pompey had conquered the world. He forgot that the spirit of the world had conquered Pompey.

Humanly speaking, Pompey's triumph was a great achievement. Before the triumphal chariot of the Roman chieftain walked three hundred and twenty-two captive princes. Legends on flying banners recorded that he had conquered twenty-one kings, eight hundred ships, nine hundred towns, and one thousand castles. He made the proud claim that he had subjugated twelve millions of people. But Pompey, who had so often stained his hands in the gore of his brothers, fell by the assassin's hand.

The achievements of the great Galilean and those of Pompey are in no way comparable. It is a contrast immeasurably vast. The Roman's side of it is made gruesome and ghastly by the

wicked sword. The trophies of men may be counted. The victories of Jesus are innumerable. His court of justice is the final tribunal for all civilized lands. His Mountain Sermon alone is mightier in its moral influence upon men than all the military achievements of the world. His Golden Rule is more potent than all the records of earthly genius. He breathes, and vast civilizations spring into life. Nations are now in full blossom that will pour without stint their ripened fruit into his waiting and open palms. Well may we sing with Mrs. Browning:

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
 And the whole earth and the skies
 Are illumed by altar candles
 Lit for blessed ministries:
 And a Priest's hand through creation,
 Waveth calm and consecration.

But the Master's earthly career had not yet come full circle. His high errand had only begun. Hereafter his companions must be scarce. Few will be able to accompany him. The heights of heroism where he will go are too lofty for the feet of men to tread. The deep seas of sorrow into which he will plunge are beyond the reach of human fathoming. The Great Soul must needs be often lonely. Only the stoutest mountaineer climbs to the

storm-shot heights. Only the highest souls tread the loftiest altitudes. Only a few can dive where priceless pearls slumber in the deep sea. The deepest souls touch the deepest seas of sorrow. They are lonely in the far journey because they must be. Others cannot go. The disciples could not go where Jesus went because they could not be what Jesus was. Let us not blame them overmuch. They could rest among the olives because they knew not the vastness of his burden. They could sleep in that garden of gloom because they were incapable of being wholly awake to the stupendous issues that fronted him.

But nothing could stay the Christ short of the goal. He would run the grim gauntlet of grief to the end. But whither? He must go to the heart-break of Peter's denial. He must go to the bitterness of Judas's betrayal. He must meet the false courts of Caiaphas and Pilate. On must he go to Calvary, to the cross, to the sepulcher. His willing feet would tread full length the way of woe. Now for a little space he halts amid sepulchral shades—calm and beautiful. Soon again he will be going. There is a rift in the sky. God's angel is at the tomb of God's Son. The Roman guard faints with fear. The stubborn seal breaks. The huge stone rolls from the doorway. The

great Galilean goes forth from that tomb. He goes to Olivet. He goes to God.

It is the central event of the centuries. It is the old, old lesson of love. With her sacrificial spirit she goes to the cross. But she goes to coronation. She may press her pallid cheek against the portals of death, but sweet Life will greet her at the gateway. After the cloudburst of sorrow will come the sunburst of joy. After the blasts and frosts of winter will come the balm and bloom of summer.

“Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

“Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

“Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

The way of transgressors is hard.—*Solomon.*

The wages of sin is death.—*Paul.*

I have had my will,
Tasted every pleasure,
I have drunk my fill
Of the purple measure:
Life has lost its zest,
Sorrow is my guest,
O, the lees are bitter, bitter—
Let me rest.—*George Arnold.*

THE avenger of wrongs is still abroad in the world. Penalty is on the track of the wrongdoer. The tardy feet of justice will overtake him by and by. The darkness of doom seems long delayed, but it will fall some time on the hardened and impenitent heart as surely as the day is followed by the night.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” As surely as winter frosts spoil the beauty of the fields that bloomed in summer, so surely will the fangs of sin bite all beauty from the soul. As certainly as the shades of night follow the sunset, so surely will darkness fall on the soul that sins.

The avenger follows physical wrongdoing. Cut the optic nerve, and blindness is the pen-

alty. Destroy the auditory nerve and deafness ensues. Paralyze the palate and the tongue, and all foods are flavorless. In the body of man the result of transgression is death.

The avenger follows spiritual wrongdoing. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Transgress the law of justice long enough, and the soul's sense of justice dies. Persistently transgress the law of purity, and corruption will ravish and ruin the heart.

The only places and persons that deserve immortal renown are those that serve and save mankind.

Let the names of Sodom, Gomorrah, Babylon, Nineveh, Athens, Rome, or rather, let their ashes be symbols of sorrow and sin. But let the names of Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Golan, Ramoth-gilead, and Bezer stand in history as the symbols of service and salvation.

"The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot." Who cares to hear pronounced the names of Cain, Herod, Judas, and Nero? They are a blot on the face of the world. But take these other names to conjure with: Abraham, Moses, Job, Paul, Luther, Livingstone, and Lincoln. These names are quenchless stars that forever flame in the skies of human history.

THE PROMISES OF GOD

The Lord is not slack concerning his promises.—*Apostle Peter.*

Though troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide—
The promise assures us, "The Lord will provide."

—*John Newton.*

THEY touch every point of human need. They touch the sad experience of sin. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The promises of God touch us on the side of our sorrow. No sane man has entirely escaped suffering. All great men are great sufferers. The great Galilean was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Only the heart of God knows the woe of the world. But he knows, and he cares. Jesus says to the sorrowing

throngs, "Come unto me, and *I will rest you.*" Hear the shout of Paul: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *too insignificant* to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away." There will be a new heaven and a new earth. Some sweet day it will be said of us, "They have no sorrow."

God's promises touch us on the side of our ignorance. It is like a sunburst on the shadowy side of a mountain. How things hitherto hidden appear when the light falls. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

The promises of God touch us on the side of our weakness. How often we lie wounded and weaponless on earth's battlefields—strength gone, courage gone, all gone but God. Then nothing is gone. All we need comes when God comes. The bloody battlefield breaks into blossom and into song. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "When I am weak, then am I strong." "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

OTHER GODS

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.—*First Commandment.*

Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.—*Aaron.*

When nations are to perish for their sins,
In human hearts the leprosy begins.

—*W. W. Hayes.*

ISRAEL'S long association with the Egyptians had its influence. Life will tell for right or wrong. It is never neutral. The social air one breathes somehow affects the soul.

To keep God supreme in the soul—that is where the Israelites failed. Is it not where others fail? Is not that the point at which we fail?

Men are constantly calling for other gods. Look at some of them. Man may be a master, but among other things he is an idol-maker.

There is the golden calf of pride. But what is pride? It is a false estimate of oneself. It gives a wrong perspective of life. Pride overestimates one's own worth and undervalues that of others.

Let no one think that good taste, laudable ambitions to be something and to do some-

thing in the world have any of the characteristics of pride. High ideals will lift one above the lowlands of personal pride.

Self-respect is far removed from pride. It is essential to success in any sphere of worthy service. There is as much difference between pride and self-respect as there is between a puffball and a peach. Puncture the puffball and it gives you wind; puncture the peach and it gives you substance. Pride is hollow; self-respect has substance. Putting it in small compass, pride is a spirit that worships the golden calf of self. And that is always a very small calf.

Fashion may be a golden calf. It always is when it appeals to lust. It always is when it compromises modesty. "Let everything be done decently and in order"—that is the Pauline pattern. Decency and order—those two principles contain the finest there is in good taste and the best there is in beauty. It is only the true that is really attractive. Every flashy fashion that is false is a calf of gold. Peafowls are all right in the barnyard, but we do not need them to strut in society.

Position may be a calf of gold. It is always that when a man sacrifices worthy principles to get it. There is where the politician's peril lies. The position is attractive; it is honorable,

and a man is apt to be tempted to pay the price of principle to secure it. Any position is wrong for you if you must give up right to get it. Appetites, ambitions, passions, and pleasures have set up many a golden calf before which men have bowed in slavish devotion.

PAUL IN ATHENS

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens.—*Acts 17. 22.*

Athens, the eye of Greece! Mother of arts
And eloquence! Native to famous wits.—*Milton.*

Paul found the Athenians frivolous and profligate—their very culture luring them to vice, and their religion an incentive to shameless debauchery.—*Lyman Abbott.*

PONDER these points in Paul's sermon, remembering the place and the occasion of its delivery.

"Too superstitious." Paul pointed out a fault the first thing, but it was not done in a faultfinding spirit. Faults must be found out before they can be corrected. No temple is built till the debris is cleared away. Herein did Paul show that he was a wise master-builder.

Notice that this great preacher pointed out the fault first which would awaken the least antagonism, or, perhaps, none at all. The Athenians were pleased to be considered religious. Paul recognized at once that they were religious.

Paul's form of addressing the Athenians conformed to the custom of their renowned orators. He said, "Ye men of Athens." That

sounded like Demosthenes. The preacher must be wise as well as courageous.

“Your devotions.” That was commendable. He had recognized that. But he would have them turn their devotions in the right direction. This wise teacher would have the feelings of devotion directed by intelligence. He taught the Athenians that they could know the God whom they had “ignorantly worshiped.”

“God, the maker of the world.” That teaching must have tested their credulity. They had been making their own gods. Now they were hearing of a God whom no man made, but who made all men; further, he made all things.

The tendency of the Greek mind was to personify everything in nature. The Greek’s love of nature was his passion. On this basis of love for nature the philosophic apostle would establish the conviction of a personal God back of nature. On this basis he would establish the idea of a personal Creator back of creation.

Paul took the pupil where he found him. He must take him then and there or not at all. He was so generous with these Greeks that he allowed it to be possible for them to worship God and still in some sense be ignorant of him. It is not a system of theology, but the simple

truth that a man must accept in order to be saved.

Spiritual worship. That was another great point in this sermon by Paul. The mind of man has always been materialistic. Men believe that what they touch is true. It is easy to forget that the intangible mind is as real as tangible matter and far more potent in determining the destinies of men.

The true worship of God does not depend upon the temple, but on the spirit of truth in the worshiper. It is not the temple spire that points skyward, but the upward-looking heart that pleases God. It is not church chancels, but Christian characters that are priceless in God's sight.

The brotherhood of nations. That was a revelation. The wisest minds of the day had scarcely been able to grasp so great a truth. The welfare of one man was in some way related to the welfare of all men. That is the great truth which is still in the birth-throes of Christian philosophy. Men are still on the outskirts of that kingdom which Christ came to establish. The sun was made to shine on all the sons of men. God made the atmosphere for all men on the earth to breathe. The Christ was no monopolist, but a great cosmopolite. His compassion compassed the sorrows of all men.

It was he who taught all men to say, as brothers, "Our Father."

Paul taught that God is close to every man. No pilgrimages are needed to find him. His word is sounding near us if only our hearts will heed. His hand is always close enough for the prodigal's palm to touch. His warm breath of love is always breathing on the penitent's cheek.

THE ENDURANCE OF LOVE

Love never faileth.—*Apostle Paul.*

Love is our highest word and the synonym of God.—*Emerson.*

For Thine is the glory of love,
And Thine the tender power,
Touching the barren heart
To leaf and flower—
Till not the lilies alone,
Beneath Thy gentle feet,
But human lives for Thee
Grow white and sweet.—*W. J. Dawson.*

LOVE is a little word, but it is surcharged with measureless might. It gives the clue to all the conquests of Christendom. Love is the beautiful bow of promise that overarches the spiritual world. See the splendid colors that Paul has pointed out.

“Love suffereth long, and is kind.”

Many a man has suffered long, and is cruel. But to suffer long and to smile through it—there is the test of spiritual supremacy. To feel the iron in one's soul and still be kind—that is conquest unknown to the giants of military warfare. Success in such endurance requires something superhuman. But such is Christian love. That is the love that comes to the heart with the coming of Christ.

“Love envieth not.”

His heart is evil who grieves at another's good. It is the sinner, and not the saint, who is stung by a brother's success. The feet of envy are sandaled with sin, and can never win in life's swift race. The hands of envy are calloused with long delving in things that are cruel, and they cannot feel the velvet palms of their superiors. The eyes of envy are dim with looking long on darkness. Envy's ears are heavy for having long been closed against the music of mercy. Envy's heart is hard, for it has long been seared with selfishness and sin.

"Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

Envy speaks in swelling words. The speech of love is like the mellow moonlight and as gentle as the dew. Love steals in amid the damp and shaded places of the soul like sunlight sifting through the leaves of forest trees. Envy stares and struts. Love stoops amid the meanest miseries to serve her fellow man.

Such ever was love's way;
To rise, it stoops.

"Love seeketh not her own."

What is one's own? Empty-handed we came into the world. Empty-handed we go out of it. While the swift years go we clutch a few things, then at the end we let them go. Nothing is worth having here whose essence we cannot take with us yonder.

Love is self-forgetful in remembering others. No man ever gets his rights by doing wrong. Good thus secured turns to evil, and, like a picked flower, fades and withers in the hand.

“Love is not easily provoked.”

Love is as sensitive as the apple of the eye. It is as susceptible as the photographer’s plate. But in seeking the good of others, love sheds a slight as a steep roof sheds rain.

Anger, wrath, malice are a wanton waste of manhood. They plunder the heart of its power. To hold hatred in one’s heart is like holding fire in one’s hand. A man makes the best progress when he is slow to wrath.

“Love thinketh no evil.”

Thoughts make men. Good thoughts make good men. Bad thoughts make bad men. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Love grows good thoughts as hotbeds grow seeds. Love scatters kind words and kind deeds as the sun scatters his beams.

“Love rejoiceth in the truth.”

He is false who has a relish for the false. The true man loves truth as the bees love honey. The honest heart holds truth above the price of rubies. He who sells truth at any price purchases condemnation at infinite cost.

Faith, hope, and love abide because they are sprung from the heart of God. The brightest

flowers and the brightest faces must fade. Love alone is fadeless. Nothing is good if love be not at its heart. She holds in her hands the branches of healing for all the bitter springs of life. She speaks the magic word that turns the saddest sobs to songs. Love is life's central sun, and when she dies no good can live for long. God is love, and all that is lovely comes from him.

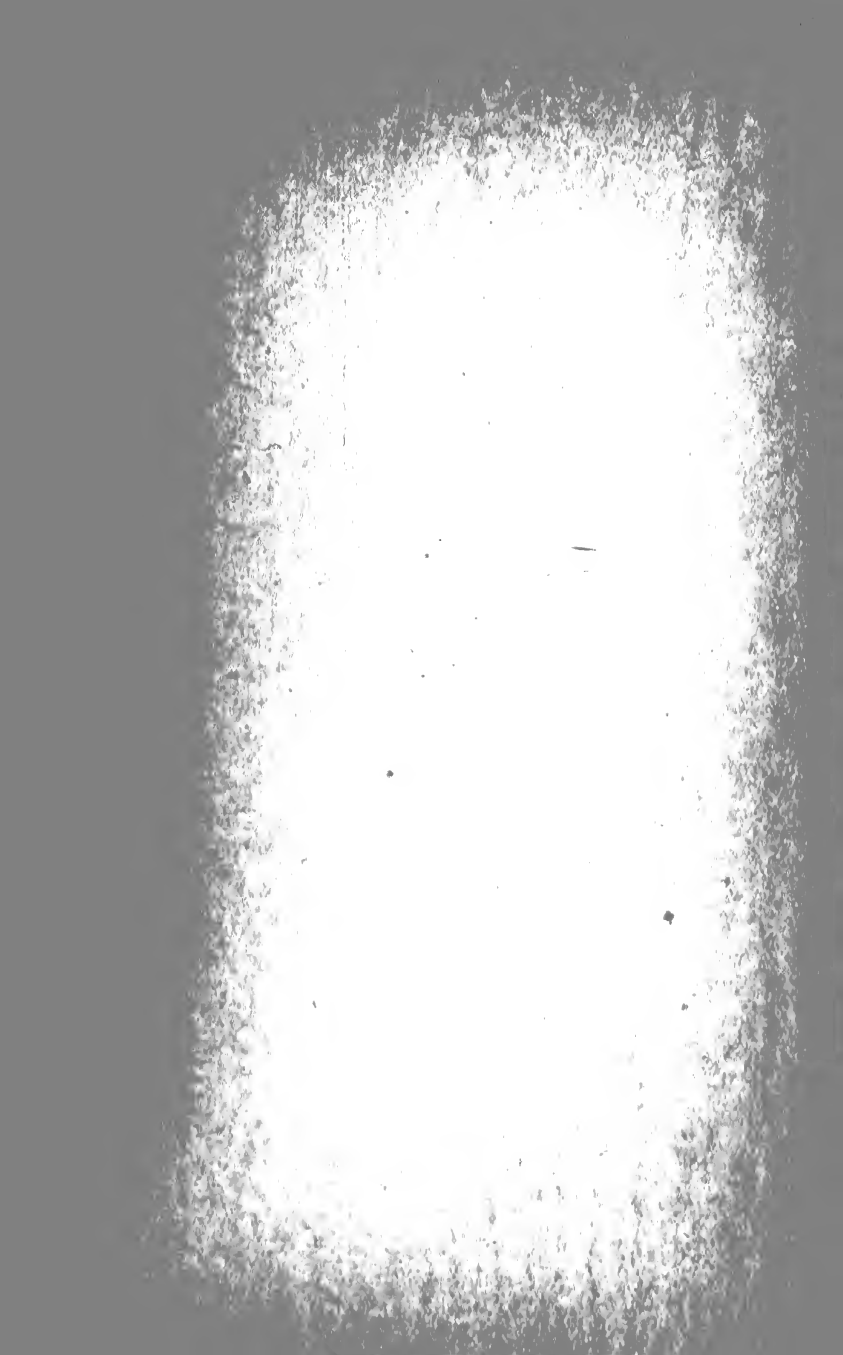
Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel that can bid the gates unroll;
And when he comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;
His way may lie through darkness, but it leads to light at
last.—*Henry van Dyke.*

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